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*CHIPPINGE.*¹

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CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MORNING OF MONDAY.

It has been said that midnight of that Sunday saw the alarm speeding along every road by which the forces of order could hope to be recruited; nevertheless in Bristol itself nothing was done to stay the work of havoc. True, a change had come over the feeling in the city; to acquiescence had succeeded the most lively alarm, and to approval, rage and boundless indignation. But the handful of officials who throughout the day had striven, honestly if not very ably, to restore order, were exhausted; and the public without cohesion or leaders were in no condition to make head against the rioters. So great, indeed, was the confusion that a troop of Gloucestershire Yeomanry which rode in after nightfall received neither orders nor billets; and being poorly led, withdrew within the hour. This, with a tumult at Bath, where the quarters of the Yeomanry were beset by a mob of Reformers, who would not let them go to the rescue, completed the isolation of the city.

One man only, in the midst of that welter, had power to intervene with effect. And he could not be found. From Queen's Square to Leigh's Bazaar, where the Third Dragoons stood inactive by their horses; from Leigh's to the Recruiting Office on College Green, where a couple of non-commissioned officers stood inactive by their desks; from the Recruiting Office

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to his lodgings in Unity Street, men, panting and protesting, in terror for their property, hurried in vain nightmare pursuit of that man. For to these persons it seemed impossible that in face of the damage already done, of thirty houses in flames, of a mob which had broken all bounds, of a city disturbed to its entrails, he could still refuse to act.

But to go to Unity Street was one thing, and to gain speech with Brereton was another. He had gone to bed. He was asleep. He was not well. He was worn out and was resting. The seekers, with the roar of the fire in their ears and ruin staring them in the face, heard these incredible things, and went away, swearing profanely. Nor did anyone gain speech with him, until the small hours were well advanced. Then Arthur Vaughan, unable to abide by the vow he had taken not to importune him, arrived, he too furious, at the door, and found a knot of gentlemen clamouring for admission.

Vaughan had parted from Sir Robert Vermuyden some hours earlier, believing that, bad as things were, he might make head against the rioters, if he could rally his constables. But he had found no one willing to act without the soldiery; and he was here in the last resort, determined to compel Colonel Brereton to move, if it were by main force. For Vaughan had the law-keeping instincts of an Englishman and his blood boiled at the sights he had seen in the streets, at the wanton destruction of property, at the jeopardy of life, at the women made homeless, at the men made paupers. Nor was it quite out of his thoughts that if anything could harm the cause of Reform it was these deeds done in its name, these outrages fulfilling to the letter the worst which its enemies had predicted of it!

He spoke a few words to the persons who, angry and non-plussed, were wrangling at the door, then he pushed his way in, deaf to the remonstrances of the woman of the house. He did not believe, he could not believe the excuse given—that Brereton was in bed. Nero, fiddling while Rome burned, seemed nought beside that! His surprise was great when, opening the sitting-room door, he saw before him only the Honourable Bob; who, standing on the hearthrug, met his indignant look with one of forced and sickly amusement.

‘Good Heavens!’ Vaughan cried, staring at him. ‘What are you doing here? Where’s the Chief?’

Flixton shrugged his shoulders. ‘There,’ he said irritably,

'it's no use blaming me! Man alive, if he won't, he won't! And it's his business, not mine!'

'Then I'd make it mine!' Vaughan retorted. 'Where is he?'

Flixton flicked his thumb in the direction of an inner door. 'He's there,' he said. 'He's there, safe enough! For the rest, it is easy to find fault! Very easy for you, my lad! You're no longer in the service.'

'There are a good many will leave the service for this!' Vaughan rejoined; and he saw that the shot told. Flixton's face fell, he opened his mouth to reply. But disdaining to listen to excuses, of which the speaker's manner betrayed the shallowness, Vaughan opened the bedroom door and passed in.

To his boundless astonishment Brereton was really in bed, though he had a light beside him. Asleep he probably was not, for he rose at once to a sitting posture and, with dishevelled hair, confronted the intruder, his looks betraying both anger and discomfort. His sword and an undress cap, blue with a silver band, lay beside the candle on the table, and Vaughan saw that though in his shirt-sleeves he was not otherwise undressed.

'Mr. Vaughan!' he cried, 'What, if you please, does this mean?'

'That is what I am here to ask you!' Vaughan answered, his face flushed with indignation. He was too angry to pick his words. 'Are you, can you be aware, sir, what is done while you sleep?'

'Sleep?' Brereton rejoined, with a sombre gleam in his eyes. 'Sleep, man? God knows it is the last thing I do!' He clapped his hand to his brow and for a moment remained silent, holding it there. Then, 'Sleep has been a stranger to me these three nights!' he said.

'Then what do you do here?' Vaughan answered, in astonishment. He looked round the room as if he might find his answer there.

'Ah!' Brereton rejoined, with a look half suspicious, half cunning. 'That is another matter. But never mind! Never mind! I know what I am doing.'

'Know——'

'Yes, well!' the soldier replied, bringing his feet to the floor, but continuing to keep his seat on the bed. 'Very well, sir, I assure you.'

Vaughan looked aghast at him. 'But, Colonel Brereton,' he rejoined, 'do you consider that you are the only person in this city able to act? That without you nothing can be done and nothing can be ventured?'

'That,' Brereton returned, with the same shrewd look, 'is just what I do consider! Without me they cannot act! They cannot venture. And I—go to bed!'

He chuckled at it, as at a jest; and Vaughan, checked by the oddity of his manner, and with a growing suspicion in his mind, knew not what to think. At last, 'I fear that you will not be able to go to bed, Colonel Brereton,' he said gravely, 'when the moment comes to face the consequences.'

'The consequences?'

'You cannot think that a city such as this can be destroyed, and no one be called to account?'

'But the civil power——'

'Is impotent!' Vaughan answered, with returning indignation, 'in the face of the disorder now prevailing! I warn you! A little more delay, a little more license, let the people's passions be fanned by farther impunity, and nothing, nothing, I warn you, Colonel Brereton,' he continued with emphasis, 'can save the major part of Bristol from destruction!'

Brereton rose to his feet, an added wildness in his aspect. 'Good God!' he exclaimed. 'You don't mean it! Do you really mean it, Vaughan? But—but what can I do?' He sank down on the bed again, and stared at his companion. 'Eh? What can I do? Nothing!'

'Everything!'

He sprang to his feet. 'Everything! You say everything?' he cried, and his tone rose, shrill and excited. 'But you don't know!' he continued, lowering his voice as quickly as he had raised it and laying his hand on Vaughan's sleeve—'you don't know! You don't know! But I know! I was set in command here on purpose. If I acted they counted on putting the blame on me. And if I didn't act—they would still put the blame on me.'

His cunning look shocked Vaughan. 'But even so, sir,' he answered, 'you can do your duty.'

'My duty?' Brereton repeated, raising his voice again. 'And do you think it is my duty to precipitate a useless struggle? To begin a civil war? To throw away the lives of my own men and

cut down innocent folk ? To fill the streets with blood and slaughter ? And the end the same ? ’

‘ Ay, sir, I do, ’ Vaughan answered sternly. ‘ If by so doing a worse calamity may be averted ! And, for your men’s lives, are they not soldiers ? For your own life, are you not a soldier ? And will you shun a soldier’s duty ? ’

Brereton clapped his hand to his brow, and, holding it there, paced the room in his shirt and breeches. ‘ My God ! My God ! ’ he cried, as he went. ‘ I do not know what to do ! But if—if it be as bad as you say—— ’

‘ It is as bad, and worse ! ’

‘ I might try once more, ’ looking at Vaughan with a troubled, undecided eye, ‘ what showing my men might do ? What do you think ? ’

Vaughan thought that if the other were once on the spot, if he saw with his own eyes the lawlessness of the mob, he might act. And he assented. ‘ Shall I pass on the order, sir, ’ he added, ‘ while you dress ? ’

‘ Yes, I think you may. Yes, certainly. Tell the officer commanding to march his men to the Square and I’ll meet him there. ’

Vaughan waited for no more. He suspected that the burden of responsibility had proved too heavy for Brereton’s mind. He suspected that the Colonel had brooded upon his position between a Whig Government and a Whig mob until the notion that he was sent there to be a scapegoat had become a fixed idea ; and with it the determination that he would not be forced into strong measures had become also a fixed idea.

Such a man, if he was to be blamed, was to be pitied also. And Vaughan, even in the heat of his indignation, did pity him. But he entertained no such feeling for the Honourable Bob, and in delivering the order to him he wasted no words. After Flixton had left the room, however, he remembered that he had noted a shade of indecision in the *aide’s* manner. And warned by it, he followed him. ‘ I will come with you to Leigh’s, ’ he said.

‘ Better come all the way, ’ Flixton replied, with covert insolence. ‘ We’ve half a dozen spare horses. ’

The next moment he was sorry he had spoken. For, ‘ Done with you ! ’ Vaughan cried. ‘ There’s nothing I’d like better ! ’

Flixton grunted. He had overreached himself. But he could not withdraw the offer, and Vaughan went out with him.

Let no man think that the past is done with, though he sever it

as he will. The life from which he has cut himself off in disgust has none the less cast the tendrils of custom about his heart, which shoot and bud when he least expects it. Vaughan stood in the doorway of the stable while the men bridled. He viewed the long line of tossing heads, and the smoky lanthorns fixed to the stall-posts; he sniffed the old familiar smell of 'Stables.' And he felt his heart leap to the past. Ay, even as it leapt a few minutes later, when he rode down College Green, now in darkness, now in glare, and heard beside him the familiar clank of spur and scabbard, the rattle of the bridle-chains, and the tramp of the shod hoofs. On the men's left, as they descended the slope at a walk, the tall houses stood up in bright light; below them on the right the Float gleamed darkly; above them, the mist glowed red. Wild hurraing and an indescribable babel of shouts, mingled with the rushing roar of the flames, rose from the Square. When the troop rode into it with the first dawn, they saw that two whole sides—with the exception of a pair of houses—were burnt or burning. In addition a monster warehouse was on fire in the rear, a menace to every building to leeward of it.

The Colonel, with Flixton attending him, fell in on the flank, as the troop entered the Square. But apparently—since he gave no orders—he did not share the tingling indignation which Vaughan experienced as he viewed the scene. A few persons were still engaged in removing their goods from houses on the south side; but save for these, the decent and respectable had long since fled the place, and left it a prey to all that was most vile and dangerous in the population of a rough seaport. The rabble, left to themselves, and constantly recruited as the news flew abroad, had cast off the fear of reprisals, and believed that at last the city was their own.

The troop had not ridden far into the open before Vaughan was shocked, as well as astonished, by the appearance of Sir Robert Vermuyden, who came stumbling across the Square towards them. He was bareheaded—for in an encounter with a prowler who had approached too near he had lost his hat; he was without his cloak, though the morning was cold. His face, too, unshorn and haggard, added to the tragedy of his appearance; yet in a sense he was himself, and it was not without success that he tried to steady his voice, as, unaware of Vaughan's presence, he accosted the nearest trooper.

'Who is in command, my man?' he asked.

Flixton, who had recognised him, thrust his horse forward. 'Good Heavens, Sir Robert!' he cried. 'What are you doing here? And in this state?'

'Never mind me,' the Baronet replied. 'Are you in command?' Colonel Brereton had halted his men. He came forward. 'No, Sir Robert,' he said. 'I am. And very sorry to see you in this plight.'

'Take no heed of me, sir,' Sir Robert replied sternly. Through how many hours, hours long as days, had he not watched for the soldiers' coming! 'Take no heed of me, sir,' he repeated. 'Unless you have orders to abandon the loyal people of Bristol to their fate—act! Act, sir! If you have eyes, you can see that the mob are beginning to fire the south side on which the shipping abuts. Let that take fire and you cannot save Bristol!'

Brereton looked in the direction indicated, but he did not answer. Flixton did. 'We understand all that,' he said, somewhat cavalierly. 'We see all that, Sir Robert, believe me. But the Colonel has to think of many things; of more than the immediate moment. We are the only force in Bristol, and——'

'Apparently Bristol is no better for you!' Sir Robert replied—and this time with passion.

So far Vaughan, a horse's length behind Brereton and his *aide*, heard what passed; but with half his mind. For his eyes, roving in the direction whence Sir Robert had come, had discerned, amid a medley of goods and persons huddled about the statue, in the middle of the Square, a single figure, slender, erect, in black and white, which appeared to be gazing towards him. At first he resisted as incredible the notion which besieged him—at sight of that figure. But the longer he looked the more sure he became that it was, it was Mary! Mary, gazing towards him out of that welter of miserable and shivering figures, as if she looked to him for help!

Perhaps he should have asked Sir Robert's leave to go to her. Perhaps Colonel Brereton's to quit the troop, which he had volunteered to accompany. As a fact he gave no thought to either. He slipped from his saddle, flung the reins to the nearest man, and, crossing the roadway in three strides, he made towards her through the skulking groups who warily watched the dragoons, or hailed them tipailly, and in the name of Reform invited them to drink.

And Mary, who had risen to her feet in alarm, and was gazing after her father, her only hope, her one protection through the night,

saw Vaughan coming, tall and stern, through the prowling night-birds about her, as if she had seen an angel! She said not a word, when he came near and she was sure. Nor did he say more than 'Mary!' But he threw into that word so much of love, of joy, of relief, of forgiveness—and of the appeal for forgiveness—that it brought her to his arms, it left her clinging to his breast. All his coldness in Bond Street, his cruelty on the coach, her father's opposition, all were forgotten by her, as if they had not been!

And for him, she might have been the weakest of the weak, and fickle and changeable as the weather, she might have been all that she was not—though he had yet to learn that and how she had carried herself that night—but he knew that in spite of all he loved her. She was still the one woman in the world for him! And she was in peril. But for that there is no knowing how long he might have held her. That thought, however, presently overcame all others, made him insensible even to the sweetness of that embrace, ay, even found words for him.

'How come you here?' he cried. 'How come you here, Mary?'

She freed herself and pointed to her mother. 'I am with her,' she said. 'We had to bring her here. It was all we could do.'

He lowered his eyes and saw what she was guarding; and he understood something of the tragedy of that night. From the couch came a low continuous moaning which made the hair rise on his head. He looked at Mary.

'She does not suffer,' she said quietly. 'She does not know anything.'

'We must remove her!' he said.

She looked at him, and from him to that part of the Square where the rioters wrought still at their fiendish work. And she shuddered. 'Where can we take her?' she answered. 'They are beginning to burn that side also.'

'Then we must remove them!' he answered sternly.

'That's sense!' a hearty voice cried at his elbow. 'And the first I've heard this night!' On which he became aware of Miss Sibson, or rather of a stout body swathed in queer wrappings, who spoke in the schoolmistress's tones, and though pale with fatigue continued to show a brave face to the mischief about her. 'That's talking!' she continued. 'Do that, and you'll do a man's work!'

'Will you have courage if I leave you?' he asked. And when Mary, bravely but with inward terror, answered 'Yes,' he told her

in brief sentences—with his eyes on the movements in the Square—what course to take, if the rabble made a rush in that direction; and what to do, if the troops charged too near them, and how, by lying down, to avoid danger if the crowd resorted to firearms—since untrained men fired high. Then he touched Miss Sibson on the arm. ‘You’ll not leave her?’ he said.

‘God bless the man, no!’ the schoolmistress replied. ‘Though, for the matter of that, she’s as well able to take care of me as I of her!’

Which was not quite true. Or why in after-days did Miss Sibson, at many a cosy whist-party and over many a glass of hot negus, tell of a particular box on the ear with which she routed a young rascal, more forward than civil? Ay, and dilate with boasting on the way his teeth had rattled, and the gibes with which his fellows had seen him driven from the field?

But, if not quite true, it satisfied Vaughan. He went from them in a cold heat, and finding Sir Robert, still at words and almost at blows with the officers, was going to strike in, when another did so. Daylight was overcoming the glare of the fire, and dispelling the shadows which had lain the deeper and more confusing for that glare. Dawn laid the grey of reality upon the scene, showing all things in their true colours, the ruins more ghastly, the pale licking flames more devilish. The fire, which had swept two sides of the Square, leaving only charred skeletons of houses, gaping with vacant sockets to the sky, was now attacking the third side, of which the two most westerly houses were in flames. It was this, and the knowledge of its meaning, that, before Vaughan could interpose, flung at Colonel Brereton a man white with passion, and stuttering under the pressure of feelings too violent for utterance.

‘Do you see? Do you see?’ he cried brandishing his fist in Brereton’s face—it was Cooke. ‘You traitor! If the fire catches the fourth house on that side, it’ll get the shipping! The shipping, d’you hear, you Radical? Then the Lord knows what’ll escape! But thank God you’ll hang! You’ll—if it gets to the fourth house, I tell you, it’ll catch the rigging by the Great Crane! Are you going to move?’

Vaughan did not wait for Brereton’s answer. ‘We must charge, Colonel Brereton!’ he cried, in a voice which burst the bonds of discipline, and showed that he was determined that others should burst them also. ‘Colonel Brereton,’ he repeated firmly,

setting his horse in motion, 'we must charge without a moment's delay!'

'Wait!' Brereton answered hoarsely. 'Wait! Let me——'

'We must charge!' Vaughan replied, his face set, his mind made up. And turning in his saddle he waved his hand to the men. 'Forward!' he cried, raising his voice to its utmost. 'Forward! Trot! Charge, men, and charge home!'

He spurred his horse to the front, and the whole troop, some thirty strong, set in motion by the magic of his voice, followed him. Even Brereton, after a moment's hesitation, spurred his charger, and fell in a length behind him. The horses broke into a trot, then into a canter. As they bore down along the south side upon the south-west corner, a roar of rage and alarm rose from the rioters collected there; and scores and hundreds fled, screaming, and sought safety to right and left.

Vaughan had time to turn to Brereton, and cry, 'I beg your pardon, sir; I could not help it!' The next moment he and the leading troopers were upon the fleeing, dodging, ducking crowd; were upon them and among them. Half a dozen swords gleamed high and fell, the horses did the rest. The rabble, taken by surprise, made no resistance. In a trice the dragoons were through the mob, and the roadway showed clear behind them, save where here and there a man rose slowly and limped away, leaving a track of blood at his heels.

'Steady! Steady!' Vaughan cried. 'Halt, men! Halt! Right about!' and then, 'Charge!'

He led the men back over the same ground, chasing from it such as had dared to return, or to gather upon the skirts of the troop. Then he led his men along the east side, clearing that also and driving the rioters in a panic into the side streets. Resistance worthy of the name there was none, until, having led the troop back across the open Square and cleared that, too, of the skulkers, he came back again to the south-west corner. There the rabble, rallying from their surprise, had taken up a position in the forecourts of the houses, where they were protected by the railings. They met the soldiers with a volley of stones, and half a dozen pistol-shots. A horse fell, two or three of the men were hit; for an instant there was confusion. Then Vaughan spurred his horse into one of the forecourts, and, followed by half a dozen troopers, cleared it, and the next and the next; on which, volunteers who sprang up, as by magic, at the first act of authority, entered the houses, killed one

rioter, flung out the rest, and extinguished the flames. Still the more determined of the rascals, seeing the small number against them, clung to the place and the forecourts; and, driven from one court, retreated to another, and to another, and, still protected by the railings, kept the troopers at bay with missiles.

Vaughan, panting with his exertions, took in the position, and looked round for Brereton. 'We must send for the Fourteenth, sir!' he said. 'We are not enough to do more than hold them in check.'

'There is nothing else for it now,' Brereton replied, with a gloomy face and in such a tone that the very men shrank from looking at him; understanding, the dullest of them, what his feelings must be, and how great his shame, who, thus superseded, saw another successful in that which it had been his duty to attempt.

And what were Vaughan's feelings? He dared not allow himself the luxury of a glance towards the middle of the Square. Much less—but for a different reason—had he the heart to meet Brereton's eyes. 'I'm not in uniform, sir,' he said. 'I can pass through the crowd. If you think fit, and will give me the order, I'll fetch them, sir?'

Brereton nodded without a word, and Vaughan wheeled his horse to start. As he pushed it clear of the troop he passed Flixton.

'That was capital!' the Honourable Bob cried heartily. 'Capital! We'll handle 'em easily now, till you come back!'

Vaughan did not answer, nor did he look at Flixton; his look would have conveyed too much. Instead, he put his horse into a trot along the east side of the Square, and, regardless of a dropping fire of stones, made for the opening beside the ruins of the Mansion House. At the last moment, he glanced back, to see Mary if it were possible. But he had waited too long, he could distinguish only confused forms about the base of the statue; and he must look to himself. His road to Keynsham lay through the lowest and most dangerous part of the city.

But though the streets were full of rough men, navigators and seamen, whose faces were set towards the Square, and who eyed him suspiciously as he rode by them, none made any attempt to stop him. And when he had crossed Bristol Bridge and had gained the more open outskirts towards Totterdown, where he could urge his horse to a gallop, the pale faces of men and women at door and window announced that it was not only the upper or the middle class which had taken fright, and longed for help and order. Through

Brislington and up Durley Hill he pounded ; and it must be confessed that his heart was light. Whatever came of it, though they court-martialled him, were that possible, though they tried him, he had done something, he had done right, and he had succeeded. Whatever the consequences, whatever the results to himself, he had dared ; and his daring, it might be, had saved a city ! Of the charge, indeed, he thought nothing, though she had seen it. It was nothing, for the danger had been of the slightest, the defence contemptible. But in setting discipline at defiance, in superseding the officer commanding the troops, in taking the whole responsibility upon his own shoulders—a responsibility which few would have dreamed of taking—there he had dared, there he had played the man, there he had risen to the occasion ! If he had been a failure in the House, here, by good fortune, he had not been a failure. And she would know it. Oh, happy thought ! And happy man, riding out of Bristol with the murk and smoke and fog at his back, and the sunshine on his face !

For the sun was above the horizon as with a full heart he rode down the hill into Keynsham, and heard the bugle sound ' Boot and saddle ! ' and poured into sympathetic ears—and to an accompaniment of strong words—the tale of the night's doings.

An hour later he rode in with the Fourteenth and heard the Blues welcomed with thanksgiving, in the very streets which had stoned them from the city twenty-four hours before. By that time the officer in command of the main body of the Fourteenth at Gloucester had posted over, followed by another troop, and, seeing the state of things, had taken his own line and assumed, though junior to Colonel Brereton, the command of the forces.

After that the thing became a military evolution. One hour, two hours at most, and twenty charges along the quays and through the streets sufficed—at the cost of a dozen lives—to convince the most obstinate of the rabble of several things. *Imprimis*, that the reign of terror was *not* come. On the contrary, that law and order, and also Red Judges, survived. That Reform did not spell fire and pillage, and that at these things even a Reforming Government could not wink. In a word, by noon of that day, Monday, and many and many an hour before the ruins had ceased to smoke, the bubble which might have been easily burst before was pricked. Order reigned in Bristol, patrols were everywhere, two thousand

zealous constables guarded the streets. And though troops still continued to hasten to the scene by every road, though all England trembled with alarm, and distant Woolwich sent its guns, and Greenwich horsed them, and the Yeomanry of six counties mustered on Clifton Down, or were quartered in the public buildings, the thing was nought. Arthur Vaughan had pricked it in the early morning light when he cried 'Charge!' in Queen's Square.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FORGIVENESS.

THE first wave of thankfulness for crowning blessings or vital escapes has a softening quality against which the hearts of few are wholly proof. Old things, old hopes, old ties, old memories return on that gentle flood-tide to eyes and mind. The barriers raised by time, the furrows of ancient wrong are levelled with the plain, and the generous breast cries '*Non nobis!* Not to us only be the benefit!'

Lady Lansdowne, with something of this kind in her thoughts and pity in her heart, sat eyeing Miss Sibson in a silence which betrayed nothing of her feelings, and which the schoolmistress found irksome. Miss Sibson could beard Sir Robert at need; but of the great of her own sex—and she knew Lady Lansdowne for a very great lady indeed—her sturdy nature went a little in awe. Had her ladyship encroached indeed, Miss Sibson would have known how to put her in her place. But a Lady Lansdowne perfectly polite and wholly silent imposed on her. She rubbed her nose and was glad when the visitor spoke.

'Sir Robert has not seen her, then?'

Miss Sibson smoothed out the lap of her dress. 'No, my lady, not since she was brought into the house. Indeed, I can't say that he saw her before, for he never looked at her.'

'Do you think that I could see her?'

The schoolmistress hesitated. 'Well, my lady,' she said, 'I am afraid that she will hardly live through the day.'

'Then he must see her,' Lady Lansdowne replied quickly. And Miss Sibson observed with surprise that there were tears in the great lady's eyes. 'He must see her. Is she conscious?'

'She's so-so,' Miss Sibson answered more at her ease. After all, the great lady was human, it seemed. 'She wanders, and thinks that

she is in France, my lady; believes there's a revolution, and that they are come to take her to prison. Her mind harps continually on things of that kind—and not much wonder either! But then again she's herself. So that you don't know from one minute to another whether she's sensible or not.'

'Poor thing!' Lady Lansdowne murmured. 'Poor thing!' Her lips moved without sound. Presently, 'Her daughter is with her?' she asked.

'She has scarcely left her for a minute since she was carried in,' Miss Sibson answered. And to her eyes, too, there rose something like a tear. 'Only with difficulty have I made her take the most necessary rest. But if your ladyship pleases, I will ask whether she will see you.'

'Do so, if you please.'

Miss Sibson withdrew for the purpose, and Lady Lansdowne, left to herself, rose and looked from the window. As soon as it had been possible to move her, the dying woman had been carried into the nearest house which had escaped the flames, and Lady Lansdowne, gazing out, looked on the scene of conflict, saw lines of ruins, still as smoke in parts, and discerned between the scorched limbs of trees, from which the last foliage had fallen, the blackened skeletons of houses. A gaping crowd was moving round the Square, under the eyes of special constables, who, distinguished by white bands on their arms, guarded the various entrances. Hundreds, doubtless, who would fain have robbed were there to stare; but for the most part the guilty shunned the scene, and the gazers consisted mainly of sight-seers from the country, or from Bath, or of knots of merchants and traders who argued, some that this was what came of Reform, others that not Reform but the refusal of Reform was to blame for it.

Presently she saw Sir Robert's stately figure threading its way through the crowd. He walked erect, but with effort; yet, though her heart swelled with pity, it was not with pity for him. He would have his daughter and in a few days, in a few weeks, in a few months at most, the clouds would pass and leave him to enjoy the clear evening of his days.

But for her whom he had taken to his house twenty years before in the bloom of her beauty, the envied, petted, spoiled child of fortune, who had sinned so lightly and paid so dearly, and who now lay distraught at the close of all, what evening remained? What gleam of light? What comfort at the last?

In her behalf, the heart which Whig pride, and family prejudice, and the cares of riches had failed to harden, swelled to bursting. 'He must forgive her!' she ejaculated. 'He shall forgive her!' And gliding to the door she stayed Mary, who was in the act of entering.

'I must see your father,' she said. 'He is mounting the stairs now. Go to your mother, my dear, and when I ring, do you come!'

Mary's eyes met hers, and what they read, of feminine pity and generous purpose, need not be told. Whatever it was, the girl seized the woman's hand and kissed it with wet eyes—and fled. And when Sir Robert, ushered upstairs by Miss Sibson, entered the room and looked round for his daughter, he found in her stead the wife of his enemy.

On the instant he remembered the errand on which she had sought him six months before; and he was quick to construe her presence by its light, and to feel resentment. The wrong of years, the daily, hourly wrong, committed not against him only but against the innocent and the helpless, this woman would have him forgive at a word; merely because the doer, who had had no ruth, no pity, no scruples, hung on the verge of that step which all, just and unjust, must take! And some, he knew, standing where he stood, would forgive; would forgive with their lips, using words which meant nought to the sayer, though they soothed the hearers. But he was no hypocrite; he would not forgive. Forgive? Great Heaven, that any should think that the wrongs of a lifetime could be forgiven in an hour! At a word! Beside a bed! As soon might the grinding wear of years be erased from the heart, the wrinkles of care from the brow, the snows of age from the head! As easily might a word give back to the old the spring and flame and vigour of their youth!

Something of what he thought impressed itself on his face, but though Lady Lansdowne marked the sullen drop of his eyebrows, and the firm set of the lower face, she did not flinch. 'I came upon your name,' she said, 'in the report of the dreadful doings here—in the "Mercury," this morning. I hope, Sir Robert, I shall be pardoned for intruding.'

He murmured something, as much no as yes, and with a manner as frigid as his breeding permitted. And standing—she had reseated herself—he continued to look at her, his lips drawn down.

'I grieve,' she continued, 'to find the truth more sad than the report.'

'I do not know that you can help us,' he said.

'No?'

'No.'

'Because,' she rejoined, looking at him softly, 'you will not let me help you. Sir Robert——'

'Lady Lansdowne!' He broke in abruptly, using her name with emphasis, using it with intention. 'Once before you came to me. Doubtless you remember. Now let me say at once that if your errand to-day be the same, and I think it likely that it is the same——'

'It is not the same,' she replied with emotion which she did not try to hide. 'It is not the same! For then there was time. And now there is no time. Let a day, it may be an hour, pass, and at the cost of all you possess you will not be able to buy that which you can still have for nothing!'

'And what is that?' he asked, frowning.

'An easy heart.' He had not looked for that answer, and he started. 'Sir Robert,' she continued, rising from her seat, and speaking with even deeper feeling, 'forgive her! Forgive her, I implore you! The wrong is past, is done, is over! Your daughter is restored——'

'But not by her!' he cried, taking her up quickly. 'Not by her act!' he repeated sternly, 'or with her will! And what has she done that I should forgive? I, whose life she blighted, whose pride she stabbed, whose hopes she crushed? Whom she left solitary, wifeless, childless through the years of my strength, the years that she cannot, that no one can give back to me? Through the long summer days that were a weariness, and the dark winter days that were a torpor? Yet—yet I could forgive her, Lady Lansdowne, I could forgive her, I do forgive her that!'

'Sir Robert!'

'That, all that!' he continued, with a gesture and in a tone of bitterness which harmonised but ill with the words he uttered. 'All that she ever did amiss to me I forgive her. But—but the child's wrong—never! Had she relented indeed, at the last, had she of her own motion, of her own free will given me back my daughter, had she repented and undone the wrong, then—but no matter! she did not! She did not one,' he repeated with agitation, 'she did not any of these things. And I ask, what has she done that I should forgive her?'

She did not answer him at once, and when she did it was in a tone so low as to be barely audible.

'I cannot answer that,' she said. 'But is it the only question? Is there not another question, Sir Robert—not what she has done, or left undone, but what you—forgive me and bear with me—have left undone, or done amiss? Are you—you clear of all spot or trespass, innocent of all blame or erring? When she came to you a young girl, a young bride—and, oh I remember her, the sunshine was not brighter, she was a child of air rather than of earth, so fair and heedless, so capricious, and yet so innocent!—did you in the first days never lose patience? Never fail to make allowance? Never preach when wisdom would have smiled, never look grave when she longed for lightness, never scold when it had been better to laugh? Did you never forget that she was a score of years younger than you, and a hundred years more frivolous? Or'—Lady Lansdowne's tone was a mere whisper now—'if you are clear of all offence against her, are you clear of all offence against any, of all trespass? Have you no need to be forgiven, no need, no——'

Her voice died away into silence. She left the appeal unfinished.

Sir Robert paced the room. And other scenes than those on which he had taught himself to brood, other days than those later days of wasted summers and solitary winters, of dulness and decay, rose to his memory. Sombre moods by which it had pleased him—at what a cost!—to make his displeasure known. Sarcastic words, warrant for the facile retort that followed, curt judgments and ill-timed reproofs; and always the sense of outraged dignity to freeze the manner and embitter the tone.

So much, so much which he had forgotten came back to him as he walked the room with averted face! While Lady Lansdowne waited with her hand on the bell. Minutes were passing, minutes; who knew how precious they might be? And with them was passing his opportunity.

He spoke at last. 'I will see her,' he said huskily.

And on that Lady Lansdowne conceived a last act of kindness. She said nothing, she uttered no word of thanks. But when Mary entered, pale, and with that composure which love teaches the least experienced, she was gone. Nor as she drove in all the pomp of her liveries and outriders through Bath, through Corsham, through Chippenham, did those who ran out to watch my lady's four greys go by, see her face as the face of an angel. But

Lady Louisa, flying down the steps to meet her—four at a time and hoidenishly—was taken to her arms, unscolded; and knew by instinct that this was the time to pet and be petted, to confess and be forgiven, and to learn in the stillness of her mother's room those thrilling lessons of life, which her governess had not imparted, nor Mrs. Fairchild approved.

But more than wisdom sees, love knows.
What eye has scanned the perfume of the rose?
Has any grasped the low grey mist which stands
Ghost-like at eve above the sheeted lands?

Meanwhile Sir Robert paused on the threshold of the room—her room, which he had first entered two-and-twenty years before. And as the then and the now, the contrast between the past and the present, forced themselves upon him, what could he do but pause and bow his head? In the room a voice, her voice, yet unlike her voice, high, weak, never ceasing, was talking as from a great distance, from another world; talking, talking, never ceasing. It filled the room. Yet it did not come from a world so distant as he at first fancied; a world that was quite aloof. For when, after he had listened for a time in the shadow by the door, his daughter led him forward, Lady Sybil's eyes took note of their approach, though she recognised neither of them. Her mind was still busy amid the scenes of the riot; twisting and weaving them into a piece with old impressions of the French Terror, made on her mind in childhood by talk heard at her nurse's knee.

'They are coming! They are coming now,' she muttered, her bright eyes fixed on him. 'But they shall not take her. They shall not take her,' she repeated. 'Hide behind me, Mary. Hide, child! They shan't take you. One neck's enough, and mine is growing thin. It used not to be thin. But that's right. Hide, and they'll not see you, and when I am gone you'll escape. Hush! Here they are!' And then in a louder tone, 'I am ready,' she said, 'I am quite ready.'

Mary leant over her. 'Mother!' she cried, unable to bear the scene in silence. 'Mother! Don't you know me?'

'Hush!' the dying woman answered, a look of terror crossing her face. 'Hush, child! Don't speak! I'm ready, gentlemen; I will go with you. I am not afraid. My neck is small, and it will be but a squeeze.' And she tried to raise herself in the bed.

Mary laid gentle hands on her, and restrained her. 'Mother,' she said. 'Mother! Don't you know me? I am Mary.'

But Lady Sybil, heedless of her, looked beyond her, with fear and suspicion in her eyes. 'Yes,' she said. 'I know you. I know you. I know you. But who is—that? Who is that?'

'My father. It is my father. Don't you know him?'

But still, 'Who is it? Who is it?' Lady Sybil continued to ask. 'Who is it?'

Mary burst into tears.

'What does he want? What does he want? What does he want?' the dying woman asked in endless, unreasoning repetition.

Sir Robert had entered the room in the full belief that with the best of wills it would be hard, it would be well-nigh impossible to forgive his wife with more than the lips. But when he heard her, weak and helpless as she was, thinking of another; when he understood that she who had done so great a wrong to the child was willing to give up her own life for the child; when he felt the drag at his heart-strings of many an old and sacred recollection, shared only by her, and which that voice, that face, that form brought back, he fell on his knees by the bed.

She shrank from him, terrified. 'What does he want?' she repeated.

'Sybil,' he said, in a husky voice, 'I want your forgiveness. Sybil, wife! Do you hear me? Will you forgive me? Will you forgive me, late as it is?'

Strange to say, his voice pierced the confusion which filled the sick brain. She looked at him steadily and long; and she sighed, but she did not answer.

'Sybil,' he repeated in a quavering voice. 'Do you not know me? Don't you remember me? I am your husband.'

'Yes—I know,' she muttered.

'This is your daughter.'

She smiled.

'Our daughter. Our daughter,' he repeated.

'Mary?' she murmured. 'Mary?'

'Yes, Mary.'

She smiled weakly on him—Mary's head was touching his. But she did not answer. She remained looking at them. They could not tell whether she understood, or was slipping away again. At last Sir Robert took her hand and pressed it gently. 'Do you hear me?' he said. 'If I was harsh to you in the old days, if I made mistakes, if I wronged you, I want you—to forgive me.'

'I—forgive you,' she murmured. A faint gleam of mischief, of laughter, of the old Lady Sybil, shone for an instant in her eyes; as if she knew that she had the upper hand. 'I forgive you—everything,' she murmured. Yes, for certain now, she was slipping away.

Mary took her other hand. But she did not speak again. And before the watch on the table beside her had ticked many times she had slipped away for good, with that gleam of triumph in her eyes—forgiving.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN THE MOURNING COACH.

It is a platitude that the flood is followed by the ebb. In the heat of action, and while its warmth cheered his spirits, Arthur Vaughan felt that he had done something. True, what he had done brought him no nearer to making his political dream a reality. Not for him the promise,

It shall be thine in danger's hour
To guide the helm of Britain's power,
And midst thy country's laurelled crown
To twine a garland all thy own.

Yet he had done something. He had played the man when some others had not played the man.

But now that the crisis was over, and he had made his last round, now that he had inspected for the last time the patrols over whom he had been set, seen order restored on the Welsh Back, and panic driven from Berkeley Square, he owned the reaction. There is a fatigue which one night's rest fails to banish; and low in mind and tired in body, he felt, when he rose late on the Tuesday afternoon, that he had done nothing worth doing; nothing that altered his position in essentials.

For a time, indeed, he had fancied that things were changed. Sir Robert had requested his assistance, and allowed him to share his search; and though it was possible that the merest stranger, cast by fortune into the same adventure, had been as welcome, it was also possible that the Baronet viewed him with a more benevolent eye. And Mary—Mary, too, had flown to his arms as to a haven; but in such a position, amid surroundings so hideous, was that wonderful? Was it not certain that she would have

behaved in the same way to the merest acquaintance if he brought her aid and protection ?

The answer might be yes or no ! What was certain was that it could not avail him. For between him and her there stood more than her father's aversion, more than the doubt of her affection, more than the unlucky borough, of which he had despoiled Sir Robert. There were her possessions, there was the suspicion which Sir Robert had founded on them—on Mary's gain and his loss—there was the independence, which he must surrender, and which pride and principle alike forbade him to relinquish.

In the confusion of the night Vaughan had almost forgotten and quite forgiven. Now he saw that the thing, though forgotten, though forgiven, was there. He could not owe all to a man who had so misconstrued him, and who might misconstrue him again. He could not be dependent on one whose views, thoughts, prejudices, were opposed to his own. No, the night and its doings must stand apart. He and she had met, they had parted. He had one memory more, and—nothing was changed.

In this mood the fact that the White Lion regarded him as a hero brought him no comfort. Neither the worshipping eyes of the young lady who had tried to dissuade him from going forth on the Sunday, nor the respectful homage which dogged his movements, uplifted him. He had small appetite for his solitary dinner, and was languidly reading the 'Bristol Mercury,' when a name was brought up to him, and a letter.

'Gentleman will wait your pleasure, sir,' the man said.

He broke open the letter, and felt the blood rise to his face as his eyes fell on the signature. The few lines were from his cousin, and ran as follows :

'DEAR SIR,—I feel it my duty to inform you, as a connection of the family, that Lady Sybil Vermuyden died at five minutes past three o'clock this afternoon. Her death, which I am led to believe could in no event have been long delayed, was doubtless hastened by the miserable occurrences of the last few days.

'I have directed Isaac White to convey this intimation to your hands, and to inform you from time to time of the arrangements made for her ladyship's funeral, which will take place at Stapylton. I have the honour to be, sir,

'Your obedient servant,

'ROBERT VERMUYDEN.'

Vaughan laid the letter down with a groan. As he did so he became aware that Isaac White was in the room. 'Halloa, White,' he said. 'Is that you?'

White looked at him with unconcealed respect. 'Yes, sir,' he said. 'Sir Robert bade me wait on you in person. If I may venture,' he continued, 'to compliment you on my own account, sir—a very great honour to the family, Mr. Vaughan—in all the west country I may say——'

Vaughan stopped him, and said something of Lady Sybil's death; adding that he had never seen her but once.

'Twice, begging your pardon,' White answered, smiling. 'Do you remember I met you at Chippenham before the election, Mr. Vaughan? Well, sir, she came up to the coach, and as good as touched your sleeve, poor lady, while I was talking to you. Of course she knew that her daughter was on the coach.'

'I learned afterwards that Lady Sybil travelled by it that day,' Vaughan replied. Then with a frown he took up the letter. 'Of course,' he continued, 'I have no intention of attending the funeral.'

'But I think his honour wishes much——'

'There is no possible reason,' Vaughan said doggedly.

'Pardon me, sir,' White answered anxiously. 'You are not aware, I am sure, how highly Sir Robert appreciates your gallant conduct yesterday. No one in Bristol can view it in a stronger light. It is a happy thing he witnessed it. He thinks, indeed, that but for you her ladyship would have died in the crowd. Moreover——'

'That's enough, White,' Vaughan said coldly. 'It is not so much what Sir Robert thinks now as what he thought formerly.'

'But indeed, sir, his honour's opinion of that matter, too——'

'That's enough, White,' the young gentleman repeated, rising from his seat. He was telling himself that he was not a dog to be kicked away and called to heel again. He would forgive, but he would not return. 'I don't wish to discuss the matter,' he added with an air of finality.

And White did not venture to say more.

He did wisely. For Vaughan, left to himself, had not reflected two minutes before he felt that he had played the churl. To make amends, he called at the house to inquire after the ladies at an hour next morning when they could not be stirring. Having

performed that duty, and learned that no inquiry into the riots would be opened for some days—and also that a proposal to give him a piece of gold plate was under debate at the Commercial Rooms, he fled, pride and love at odds in his breast.

It is possible that, in Sir Robert's heart also, there was a battle proceeding. On the eve of the funeral he sat alone in the library at Stapylton, that room in which he had passed so many unhappy hours, and with which the later part of his life seemed bound up. Doubtless, as he sat, he gave solemn thought to the past and the future. The room was no longer dusty, the furniture was no longer shabby; there were fresh flowers on his table, though the season was late; and by his great leather chair, a smaller chair, filled within the last few minutes, had its place. Yet he could not forget what he had suffered there; how he had brooded there. And perhaps he thanked God, amid his more solemn thoughts, that he was not glad that she who had plagued him would plague him no more. All that her friend had urged in her behalf, all that was brightest and best in his memories of her, this generous whim, that quixotic act, rose, it may be supposed, before him. And the picture of her fair young beauty, of her laughing face in the bridal veil or under the Leghorn, of her first words to him, of her first acts in her new home! And but that the tears of age flow hardly, it is possible that he would have wept.

Presently—perhaps he was not sorry for it—a knock came at the door and Isaac White entered. He came to take the last instructions for the morrow. A few words settled what remained to be settled, and then, after a little hesitation, 'I promised to name it to you, sir,' White said. 'I don't know what you'll say to it. Dyas wishes to walk with the others.'

Sir Robert winced. 'Dyas?' he muttered.

'He says he's anxious to show his respect for the family, in every way consistent with his opinions.'

'Opinions?' Sir Robert echoed. 'Opinions? Good Lord! A butcher's opinions! Who knows but some day he'll have a butcher to represent him? Or a baker or a candlestick-maker! If ever they have the ballot, that'll come with it, White.'

White waited, but as the other said no more, 'You won't forbid him, sir?' he said, a note of appeal in his voice.

'Oh, let him come,' Sir Robert answered wearily. 'I suppose,' he continued, striving to speak in the same tone, 'you've heard nothing from his—Member?'

'From—oh, from Mr. Vaughan, sir? No, sir. But Mr. Flixton is coming.'

Sir Robert muttered something under his breath, and it was not flattering to the Honourable Bob. Then he turned his chair and held his hands over the blaze. 'That will do, White,' he said. 'That will do.' And he did not look round until the agent had left the room.

But White was certain that even on this day of sad memories, with the ordeal of the morrow before him, Arthur Vaughan's attitude troubled his patron. And when, twenty-four hours later, the agent's eyes, travelling round the vast assemblage which regard for the family had gathered at the grave, fell upon Arthur Vaughan, and he knew that he had repented and come, he was glad. The young Member held himself a little apart from the small group of family mourners; a little apart also from the larger company whom respect or social ties had brought thither. Among these last, who were mostly Tories, many were surprised to see Lord Lansdowne and his son. But more, aware of the breach between Mr. Vaughan and his cousin, and of the former's peculiar position in the borough, were surprised to see him. And these, while their thoughts should have been elsewhere, stole furtive glances at the sombre figure; and when Vaughan left, still alone and without speaking to any, followed his departure with interest. In those days of mutes and crape-coloured staves, mourning cloaks and trailing palls, it was not the custom for women to bury their dead. And Vaughan, when he had made up his mind to come, knew that he ran no risk of seeing Mary.

That he might escape with greater ease, he had left his post-chaise at a side-gate of the park. The moment the ceremony was over, he made his way to it, now traversing beds of fallen chestnut and sycamore leaves, now striding across the sodden turf. The solemn words which he had heard, emphasised as they were by the scene, the grey autumn day, the lonely park, and the dark groups threading their way across it, could not hold his thoughts from Mary. She would be glad that he had come. Perhaps it was for that reason that he had come.

He had passed through the gate of the park and his foot was on the step of the chaise, when he heard White's voice, calling after him. He turned and saw the agent hurrying desperately after him. White's mourning suit was tight and new and ill made for haste; and he was hot and breathless. For a moment, 'Mr. Vaughan! Mr. Vaughan!' was all he could say.

Vaughan turned a reluctant, almost a stern face to him. Not that he disliked the agent, but he thought that he had got clear.

'What is it?' he asked, without removing his foot from the step.

White looked behind him. 'Sir Robert, sir,' he said 'has something to say to you. The carriage is following. If you'll be good enough,' he continued, mopping his face, 'to wait a moment!'

'Sir Robert cannot wish to see me at such a time,' Vaughan answered, between wonder and impatience. 'He will write, doubtless.'

'The carriage should be in sight,' was White's answer. And truly as he spoke it came into view; rounding the curve of a small coppice of beech trees, it rolled rapidly down a declivity, and ascended towards them as rapidly.

A moment and it would be here. Vaughan looked uncertainly at his post-boy. He wished to catch the York House coach at Chippenham, and he had little time to spare.

It was not the loss of time, however, that he really had in his mind. But he could guess, he fancied, what Sir Robert wished to say; and he did not deny that the old man was generous in saying it at such a moment—if that were his intention. But his own mind was made up; he could only repeat what he had said to White. It was not a question of what Sir Robert had thought, or now thought, but of what *he* thought. And the upshot of all his thoughts was that he would not be dependent upon any man. He had differed from his cousin once, and the elder had treated the younger man with injustice and contumely; that might occur again. Indeed, taking into account the difference in their political views in an age when politics counted for much, it was sure to occur again. But his mind was made up that it should not occur to him. Unhappy as the resolution made him, he would be free. He would be his own man. He would remember nothing except that that night had changed nothing.

It was with a set face, therefore, that he watched the carriage draw near. Apparently it was a carriage which had conveyed guests to the funeral, for the blinds were drawn. 'It will save time, if it takes you a mile on your way,' White said with some nervousness. 'I will tell your chaise to follow.' And he opened the door.

Vaughan raised his hat, and stepped in. It was only when the door was closing behind him and the carriage starting anew at

a word from White, that he saw that it contained, not Sir Robert Vermuyden, but a lady.

'Mary!' he cried. The name broke from him in his astonishment.

She looked at him with self-possession and a gentle, unsmiling gravity. She indicated the front seat, and 'Will you sit there?' she said. 'I can talk to you better, Mr. Vaughan, if you sit there.'

He obeyed her, marvelling. The blind on the side on which she sat was raised a few inches, and in the subdued light her graceful head showed like some fair flower rising from the depth of her mourning. For she wore no covering on her head, and he might have guessed, had he had any command of his thoughts, that she had sprung as she was into the nearest carriage. Amazement, however, put him beyond thinking.

Her eyes met his seriously. 'Mr. Vaughan,' she said, 'my presence must seem extraordinary to you. But I am come to ask you a question. Why did you tell me six months ago that you loved me—if you did not?'

He was as deeply agitated as she was quiet on the surface. 'I told you nothing but the truth,' he said.

'No,' she replied.

'But yes! A hundred times, yes!' he cried.

'Then you are altered? That is it?'

'Never!' he cried. 'Never!'

'And yet—things are changed. My father wrote to you, did he not, three days ago? And said as much as you could look to him to say?'

'He said——!'

'He withdrew what he had uttered in an unfortunate moment. He withdrew that which, I think, he had never believed in his heart. He said as much as you could expect him to say?' she repeated, her colour mounting a little, her eyes challenging him with courageous firmness.

'He said,' Vaughan answered in a low voice, 'what I think it became him to say.'

'You understood that his feelings were changed towards you?'

'To some extent.'

She drew a deep breath and sat back. 'Then it is for you to speak,' she said.

But before, agitated as he was, he could speak, she leant forward again. 'No,' she said, 'I had forgotten. I had forgotten.' And the slight quivering of her lips, a something piteous in her eyes, reminded him once more, once again—and the likeness tugged at his heart—of the Mary Smith who had paused on the threshold of the inn at Maidenhead, alarmed and abashed by the bustle of the coffee-room. 'I had forgotten! It is not my father you cannot forgive—it is I, who am unworthy of your forgiveness? You cannot make allowance,' she continued, stopping him by a gesture, as he opened his mouth to speak, 'for the weakness of one who had always been dependent, who had lived all her life under the dominion of others, who had been taught by experience that, if she would eat, she must first obey. You can make no allowance, Mr. Vaughan, for such an one placed between a father, whom it was her duty to honour, and a lover to whom she had indeed given her heart, she knew not why—but whom she barely knew, with whose life she had no real acquaintance, whose honesty she must take on trust, because she loved him? You cannot forgive her because, taught all her life to bend, she could not, she did not stand upright under the first trial of her faith?'

'No!' he cried violently. 'No! No! It is not that!'

'No?' she said. 'You do forgive her then? You have forgiven her? The more as to-day she is not weak. The earth is not level over my mother's grave, some may say hard things of me—but I have come to you to-day.'

'God bless you!' he cried.

She drew a deep breath and sat back. 'Then,' she said, with a sigh as of relief, 'it is for you to speak.'

There was a gravity in her tone, and so complete an absence of all self-consciousness, all littleness, that he owned that he had never known her as she was, had never measured her true worth, had never loved her as she deserved to be loved. Yet—perhaps because it was all that was left to him—he clung desperately to the resolution he had formed, to the position which pride and prudence alike had bidden him to take up.

'What am I to say?' he asked hoarsely.

'Why, if you love me, if you forgive me,' she answered softly, 'do you leave me?'

'Can you not understand?'

'In part, I can. But not altogether. Will you explain? I—I think,' she continued with a movement of her flower-like head,

that for gentle dignity he had never seen excelled, 'I have a right to an explanation.'

'You know of what Sir Robert accused me?'

'Yes.'

'Am I to justify him? You know what was the difference which came between us, which first divided us? And what I thought right then, I still think right? Am I to abandon it? You know what I bore? Am I to live on the bounty of one who once thought so ill of me, and may think as ill again? Of one who, differing from me, punished me so cruelly? Am I to sink into dependence, to sacrifice my judgment, to surrender my political liberty into the hands of one who——'

'Of my father!' she said gravely.

He could not, so reminded, say what he had been going to say, but he assented by a movement of the head. And after an interval of silence, 'I cannot,' he cried passionately, 'I cannot, even to secure my happiness, run that risk!'

She looked from the window of the carriage, and in a voice which shook a little, 'No,' she said, 'I suppose not.'

He was silent and he suffered. He dared not meet her eyes. Why had she sought this interview? Why had she chosen to torment him? Ah, if she knew, if she only knew what pain she was inflicting upon him!

But apparently she did not know. For by-and-by she spoke again. 'No,' she said. 'I suppose not. Yet have you thought'—and now there was a more decided tremor in her voice—'that that which you surrender is not all there is at stake? Your independence is precious to you, and you have a right, Mr. Vaughan, to purchase it, even at the cost of your happiness. But have you a right to purchase it at the cost of another's? At the cost of mine? Have you thought of my happiness?' she continued, 'or only of yours—and of yourself? To save your independence—shall I say, to save your pride?—you are willing to set your love aside. But have you asked me whether I am willing to pay my half of the price? My heavier half? Whether I am willing to set my happiness aside? Have you thought of—me at all?'

If he had not, then, when he saw how she looked at him, with what eyes, with what love, as she laid her hand on his arm, he had been more than man if he had resisted her long! But he still fought with himself, and with her; staring with hard flushed face straight

before him, telling himself that by all that was left to him he must hold.

‘I think, I think,’ she said gently, yet with dignity, ‘you have not thought of me.’

‘But your father—Sir Robert——’

‘He is an ogre, of course,’ she cried in a tone suddenly changed. ‘But you should have thought of that before, sir,’ she continued, tears and laughter in her voice. ‘Before you travelled with me on the coach! Before you saved my life! Before you—looked at me! For you can never take it back. You can never give me myself again. I think that you must take me!’

And then he did not resist her any longer. He could not. And the carriage was stayed, and orders were given. And, empty and hugely overpaid, the yellow post-chaise ambled on to Chippenham; and bearing two inside, and a valise on the roof, the mourning coach drove slowly and solemnly back to Stapylton. As it wound its way over the green undulations of the park, the rabbits that ran, and then stopped, cocking their scuts, to look at it, saw nothing strange in it. Nor the fallow-deer of the true Savernake breed, who, before they fled through the dying bracken, eyed it with poised heads. Nay, the heron which watched its approach from the edge of the Garden Pool, and did not deign to drop a second leg, saw nothing strange in it. Yet it bore, for all that, the strangest of all earthly passengers, and the strongest, and the bravest, and the fairest—and withal, thank God, the most familiar. For it carried Love. And love the same yet different, love gaunt and grey-haired, yet kind and warm of heart, met it at the door and gave it welcome.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THREADS AND PATCHES.

THOUGH England had not known for fifty years an outbreak so formidable or so destructive as that of which the news was laid on men’s breakfast-tables on the Tuesday morning, it had less effect on the political situation than might have been expected. It sent, indeed, a thrill of horror through the nation. And had it occurred at an earlier stage of the Reform struggle, before the middle class had fully committed itself to a trial of strength

with the aristocracy, it must have detached many of the more timid and conservative of the Reformers. But it came too late. The die was cast; men's minds were made up on the one side and the other. Each saw events coloured to his wish. And though Wetherell and Croker, and the devoted band who still fought manfully round those chieftains, called heaven and earth to witness the first-fruits of the tree of Reform, the majority of the nation preferred to see in these troubles the alternative to the Bill—the abyss into which the whole country would be hurled if that heaven-sent measure were not passed.

On one thing, however, all were agreed. The outrage was too great to be overlooked. The law must be vindicated, the law-breakers must be punished. To this end the Government, anxious to clear themselves of the suspicion of collusion, appointed a special Commission, and sent it to Bristol to try the rioters; and four poor wretches were hanged, a dozen were transported, and many received minor sentences. Having thus, a little late in the day, taught the ignorant that Reform did not spell Revolution after the French pattern, the Cabinet turned their minds to the measure again. And in December they brought in the Third Reform Bill, with the fortunes and passage of which this story is not at pains to deal.

But of necessity the misguided creatures who kindled the fires in Queen's Square on that fatal Sunday, and swore that they would not leave a gaol standing in England, were not the only men who suffered. Sad as their plight was, there was one whose plight—if pain be measured by the capacity to feel—was sadder. While they were being tried in one part of Bristol, there was proceeding in another part an inquiry charged with deeper tragedy. Not those only who had done the deed, but those who had suffered them to do it, must answer for it. And the fingers of all pointed to one man. The magistrates might escape—the Mayor indeed had done his duty creditably, if to little purpose; for war was not their trade, and the thing at its crisis had become an affair of war. But Colonel Brereton could not shield himself behind that plea: so many had behaved poorly that the need to bring one to book was the greater.

He was tried by Court-martial, and among the witnesses was Arthur Vaughan. By reason of his position, as well as of the creditable part he had played, the Member for Chippinge was heard by the Court with more than common attention; and he moved all

who listened to him by his painful anxiety to set the accused's conduct in the best light ; to show that what was possible by daylight on the Monday morning might not have been possible on the Sunday night, and that the choice from first to last was between two risks. No question of Colonel Brereton's courage—for he had served abroad with credit, nay, with honour—entered into the inquiry ; and it was proved that a soldier's duty in such a case was not well defined. But afterwards Vaughan much regretted that he had not laid before the Court the opinion he had formed at the time—that during the crisis of the riots Brereton, obsessed by one idea, was not responsible for his actions. For, sad to say, on the fifth day of the inquiry, sinking under a weight of mental agony which a man of his reserved and melancholy temper was unable to support, the unfortunate officer put an end to his life. Few have paid so dearly for an error of judgment and the lack of that coarser fibre which has enabled many an inferior man to do his duty. The page darkens with his fate, too tragical for such a theme as this. And if by chance these words reach the eye of any of his descendants, theirs be the homage due to the memory of a signal misfortune and an honourable but hapless man.

Of another and greater person whose life touched Arthur Vaughan's once and twice, and of whom, with all his faults, it was never said by his worst enemy that he feared responsibility or shunned the post of danger, a brief word must suffice. If Lord Brougham did not live to see that complete downfall of the great Whig houses which he had predicted, he lived to see their power ruinously curtailed. He lived to see their influence totter under the blow which the Repeal of the Corn Laws dealt the landed interest, he lived to see the Reform Bill of 1867, he lived almost to see the *coup de grâce* given to their leadership by the Ballot Act. And in another point his prophecy came true. As it had been with Burke and Sheridan and Tierney it was with him. His faults were great, as his merits were transcendent ; and presently in the time of his need his high-born associates remembered only the former. They took advantage of them to push him from power ; and he spent nearly forty years, the remnant of his long life, in the cold shade of Opposition. The most brilliant, the most versatile, and the most remarkable figure of the early days of the century, whose trumpet voice had roused England as it has never been roused from that day to this, and whose services to education and progress are acknowledged but slightly even now, paid for the

phenomenal splendour of his youth by long years spent in a changed and changing world, jostled by a generation forgetful or heedless of his fame. To us he is but the name of a carriage; or is remembered, if at all, for his part in Queen Caroline's trial. While Wetherell, that stout fighter, Tory of the Tories, witty, slovenly, honest man, whose fame was once in all mouths, whose caricature was once in all portfolios, and whose breeches made the fortune of many a charade, is but the shadow of a name.

The year had waned and waxed, and it was June again. At Stapylton the oaks were coming to their full green; the bracken was lifting its million heads above the sod, and by the edge of the Garden Pool the water-voles sat on the leaves of the lilies and cleaned their fur. Arthur Vaughan—strolling up and down with his father-in-law, not without an occasional glance at Mary, recumbent on a seat on the lawn—looked grave.

'I fancy,' he said presently, 'that we shall learn the fate of the Bill to-day.'

'Very like, very like,' Sir Robert answered, in an offhand fashion, as if the subject were not to his taste. And he turned about and by the aid of his stick expounded his plan for enlarging the flower garden.

But Vaughan returned to the subject. 'If not to-day, to-morrow,' he said. 'And that being so, I've wanted for some time, sir, to ask you what you wish me to do.'

'To do?'

'As to the seat at Chippinge.'

Sir Robert's face expressed his annoyance. 'I told you—I told you long ago,' he replied, 'that I should never interfere with your political movements.'

'And you have kept your word, sir. But as Lord Lansdowne cedes the seat to you for this time, I assume——'

'I don't know why you assume anything!' Sir Robert retorted irritably.

'I assume only that you will wish me to seek another seat.'

'I certainly don't wish you to lead an idle life,' Sir Robert answered. 'When the younger men of our class do that, when they cease to take an interest in political life, on the one side or the other, our power will indeed be ended. Nothing is more certain than that. But for Chippinge, I don't choose that a stranger should hold a seat close to my own door. You might have known

that! For the party, I have taken steps to furnish Mr. Cooke, a man whose opinions I thoroughly approve, with a seat elsewhere; and I have therefore done my duty in that direction. For the rest, the mischief is done. I suppose,' he continued in his driest tone, 'you won't want to bring in another Reform Bill immediately?'

'No, sir,' Vaughan answered gratefully. 'Nor do I think that we are so far apart as you assume. The truth is, Sir Robert, that we all fear one of two things, and according as we fear the one or the other we are dubbed Whigs or Tories.'

'What are your two things?'

'Despotism, or anarchy,' Vaughan replied modestly.

Sir Robert sniffed. 'You don't refine enough,' he said, pleased with his triumph. 'We all fear despotism; you, the despotism of the one: I, a worse, a more cruel, a more hopeless despotism, the despotism of the many! That is the real difference between us.'

Vaughan looked thoughtful. 'Perhaps you are right,' he said. 'But—what is that?' He raised his hand. The deep note of a distant gun rolled up the valley from the town.

'The Lords have passed the Bill,' Sir Robert replied. 'They are celebrating the news in Chippinge. Well, I am not sorry that my day is done. I give you the command. See only, my boy,' he continued, with a loving glance at Mary, who had risen, and, joined by Miss Sibson, was coming to the end of the bridge to meet them, 'see only that you hand it on to others—I do not say, as I give it to you, but as little impaired as may be.'

And again, as Mary called to them to know what it was, the sound of the gun rolled up the valley—the knell of the system, good or bad, under which England had been ruled so long. The battle of which Brougham had fired the first shot in the Castle Yard at York was past and won.

Boom!

NOTE.—The honourable part in the suppression of the Bristol Riots, ascribed above to Arthur Vaughan, was actually played by Major, afterwards Sir Digby, Mackworth, Aide-de-Camp to Lord Hill. Major Mackworth, though present in an unofficial capacity, took upon himself to give the order to charge, which in the opinion of many saved the city.

THE END.

THACKERAY'S MAHOGANY TREE.¹

BY SIR FRANCIS COWLEY BURNAND.

CHRISTMAS is here :
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill,
Little care we :
Little we fear
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The Mahogany Tree.

Once on the boughs
Birds of rare plume
Sang, in its bloom ;
Here we carouse,
Singing like them,
Perched round the stem
Of the jolly old tree.

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit ;
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short—
When we are gone
Let them sing on
Round the old tree.

Evenings we knew,
Happy as this ;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust !
We sing round the tree.

Care, like a dun,
Lurks at the gate ;
Let the dog wait ;
Happy we'll be !
Drink, every one ;
Pile up the coals,
Fill the red bowls,
Round the old tree !

Drain we the cup.—
Friend, art afraid ?
Spirits are laid
In the Red Sea.
Mantle it up ;
Empty it yet ;
Let us forget,
Round the old tree.

Sorrows, begone !
Life and its ills,
Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.
Come with the dawn,
Blue-devil sprite,
Leave us to-night
Round the old tree.

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THIS is the air to which the words of 'The Mahogany Tree,' long after the song was written, were set. To this tune, in Thackeray's presence, it was sung at the 'Punch' Table one Wednesday evening in 1863 by Horace Mayhew, familiarly known as 'Poni,' or 'Ponny' Mayhew. Personally, I do not remember ever hearing Horace Mayhew get beyond two verses. These were not necessarily the first and second; he picked them, at haphazard, as he could best remember them. Had I not seen Thackeray's song in print I should have been under the lasting impression of its having consisted of only these two verses, which were all that the *convives* of Horace Mayhew around the Mahogany Tree would allow him to sing.

The air is so homely, so simple, so instantly caught by the ear, so firmly retained by the memory. Whence comes it? From Germany? Undoubtedly. Sir Alexander Mackenzie permits me to quote his opinion that it was originally a German *Volkslied*.

Thackeray, on his own showing, was no vocalist; he could chaunt in a kind of burlesque-ecclesiastical fashion; and Sir John Tenniel, who, on being invited to join the staff, found Thackeray in his usual place at the 'Punch' Table, affirms that Thackeray never sang this song at any Wednesday night 'Punch' dinner within his own memory. But Sir John can clearly recall Horace Mayhew 'quavering it out, with real emotion in his voice, at the "Punch" dinner, that in ordinary routine took place on the first Wednesday after Thackeray's funeral.' This I also remember. And I can call to mind how, on subsequent occasions, Horace Mayhew, late in the evening, would 'drop into' song, and volunteer, for what he supposed to be our benefit, as much as he could at the moment remember of 'dear old Thack's' 'Mahogany Tree.'

That, on the evening of December 24, 1863, this song was

given, with full chorus, at some private dinner party in Kensington by some of Thackeray's friends, is not improbable; but that this musical effort was inspired by Horace Mayhew's bringing 'the fatal news' of Thackeray's death—as Mr. Spielmann recounts in 'The History of "Punch"' on the authority of Mr. Frederick Greenwood—is rather unlikely, seeing that knowledge of the sudden death of W. M. Thackeray had been common property in London since the appearance of the second edition of the early morning papers. These guests must have been very much behind their time if they had heard nothing of the sad event until Poni Mayhew arrived with it at the dinner hour.

This dinner had nothing whatever to do with 'the "Punch" dinner,' which had taken place on Wednesday, the 23rd, whereat Thackeray had not been present. The last "Punch" dinner that Thackeray attended was on December 16. These facts are placed beyond possibility of dispute by the entries in Mr. Henry Silver's carefully kept diary, to which he has kindly given me access.

May I be permitted to take advantage of the space at my disposal in order to add a humble record of my deep and lasting attachment, personally, to Thackeray? On me, when I was a young man, within the brief space of the few months that I had the inestimable advantage of his friendship, he bestowed the kindest words of encouragement, totally free from anything like an air of patronage, and it was he who stimulated my early efforts with his congenial appreciation.

One more word. Where was the particular Mahogany Tree that inspired the song? Although the sentiment that pervaded the cheery, yet pathetic, lines is applicable to all such social gatherings at Christmas time, yet, undoubtedly, from the 'Mahogany Tree' in the Bouverie Street dining-room, at No. 11, came the first inspiration. Here once a week, in the good old days, the "Punch" men 'of rare plume' sat round it for dinner and discussion. Were they not all 'birds of rare plume'? Each one when at his desk had his 'rare plume' in his hand, and rare work did these 'rare plumes' effect.

On the old table are still in evidence the carved initials of the men who have made memorable this plain unvarnished board, and among these you will find, artistically and incisively cut, the monogram of 'W. M. T.'—William Makepeace Thackeray.

BLACKSTICK PAPERS. NO. 11.¹

BY MRS. RICHMOND RITCHIE.

MRS. GASKELL.

I.

Two old friends, we will call them 'M.' and 'N.,' were talking of Mrs. Gaskell one day not long ago as they drove along a green Surrey lane. It was shaded from the sultry August sunshine by spreading oaks and beeches, and led, as Surrey lanes do lead, from one sweet rural distance to another, from one peaceful common to another, from dazzling light to shade. The drive had been long and peaceful, and the horses' feet fell tranquilly and rapidly in cadence, until out of the sunset they brought the two ladies into twilight. Once when the road turned the carriage passed by an open pond still reflecting all the lovely lights and dying colours overhead. 'M.,' who had taken 'N.' for this charming expedition, began remembering how Mrs. Gaskell, too, had once delighted in driving on and on, and how, and with what pleasure to them all, a little journey had once been planned—a scheme for taking her by road through two or three beautiful counties that she wished to see. There were to be relays of horses in waiting, and the drive was to last for several days. Mrs. Gaskell had delighted in the prospect and in talking it over. But this was in the autumn of 1865, and it was but a happy fancy never to be fulfilled. 'M.' spoke of this and of many meetings more happily realised, and still to be dwelt upon.

'N.' said she had met Mrs. Gaskell once or twice only, but always as a friend, and with natural warm admiration for the writer of the books she had loved from her girlhood, and still loved and enjoyed as ever; but that only one or two very clear impressions remained to her of Mrs. Gaskell herself, that most memorable and interesting woman.

Then 'M.' answered thoughtfully: 'Few people have ever more deserved to be remembered. Many have written of her and

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spoken of her, but they have scarcely ever expressed her altogether as she was. They have scarcely rendered the remarkable *charm* of her presence, the interest of all she said, or of her vivid memory, of her delightful companionship.'

'M.' spoke with some emotion and with that beautiful fidelity of friendship which all who know her will ever recognise; and then she went on to describe something more of what Mrs. Gaskell's life had been, apart from her literary life—her fellowship for those among whom she lived, her good sense and administrative faculty, her bright intuitions, and also the extraordinary ability she had shown in all she had instigated. More than once she had seen Manchester at a cruel pass. Hard times had been succeeded by 'turbulence, by intimidation, and fall in wages'; then, in 1862, came the Lancashire cotton famine, and all that Mrs. Gaskell and her husband achieved with the help of their own girls is still remembered. Hers was the spirit which flung itself into surrounding lives, adding how much to them! There was one special enterprise among others for selling milk in the poorer quarters of Manchester, at a time when milk was scarcely to be had at all for the poor. 'This,' said 'M.,' 'was a most marked and successful venture among the many generous intelligent charities unaffectedly carried on by Mrs. Gaskell and those belonging to her.'

One remembrance 'M.' and 'N.' found they had in common. 'N.' has already written of a certain gusty morning long ago, when a party of ladies sat indoors listening not to the wind, but to Mrs. Gaskell, as she told them ghost stories. 'She spoke of Scotch ghosts, historical ghosts, spirited ghosts with faded uniforms and nice old powdered queues.' 'N.' is quoting from her own bygone notes. The little party was on a visit to Oak Hill Lodge at Hampstead, where Mr. and Mrs. George Smith were then living, and where certain grown-up men and women of to-day were playing as infants on the lawn of a sloping garden. As the hours went on the wind abated, and presently the hosts and their friends came outside to sit under the trees in the open air, and the one central figure still talked on most charmingly to the rest. The voice seemed almost present once more as 'M.' and 'N.' recalled it all—a delicate enunciation, singularly clear and cultivated, a harmonious note moved by a laugh now and then, and restrained by a certain shyness, that shyness which belongs to sensitive people who feel what others are feeling almost too quickly, and are at times suddenly hindered by the vibration. On that well-

remembered day Mrs. Gaskell went on telling the stories as her listeners asked for them. There were legends of smugglers as well as of ghosts, adventures, too, and stories with weather in them, wild snowstorms rising and dying away. There is one ghost story in 'Sylvia's Lovers' which is told by Sylvia's father, and which might have well been one of those that were recounted then. It is the story of a traveller driving in the dark along a lonely place, when he suddenly becomes aware of the presence of his dead brother in the cart beside him, and as he drives on wondering into moonlight, two threatening figures suddenly rise up from behind the hedge, and he hears a muttered oath: 'What, two of them!' And the robbers hesitate and fall back, and he passes on in safety, and then he realises that his protector is there no more.

Leslie Stephen came walking down the garden with Mr. Thurstan Holland, Mrs. Gaskell's own son-in-law to be, on that special day as we all sat listening still, and the talk became general and reality began when the story-telling came to an end. This must have been in the autumn of 1864.

II.

Once, only a year before, Mrs. Gaskell had come with one of her daughters to see us in my father's house, and I can just remember her talking to him in the big dining-room at Palace Green, looking up laughing, inquiring, responding, gay, yet definite, such is the impression I have of her presence. Nor do I forget the motherly letter, full of truest warmth and expression of feeling, in which, after our father's death, she invited us to stay at Manchester, to come to that home in Plymouth Grove in which, for years and years to be, such true hospitality, such life-long friendship, awaited me and mine.

My father died in 1863. Within two years Mrs. Gaskell also died, at about the same age. He 'laid the weary pen aside,' but she did not seem weary; she was at work and at play almost to the last, and living her full life, with all its cares and joys, its achievements, and anxieties, and labours for others. She had failed a little, so we read—I am again quoting from the interesting biographical introduction to the new edition of her books—and then the end came very suddenly, as she was talking to her children.

She had just finished, or all but finished, the last most mature and lovable of all her books. To people of an elder generation re-reading 'Wives and Daughters' now, strong, gentle, and full of

fun and wisdom, all youth seems to be in it ; it is rest to live again in the merry touching pages.

I remember hearing one of Mrs. Gaskell's daughters say that before beginning a book her mother never failed to write down at length the sketch of the story that was to be. She took care to have it all safe, and to mark ahead the incidents and the characters, and she kept to her plans. This presence and prescience of mind was a gift of no less use to her in her imaginative than in her active life. Other authors, less capable, indeed, write and rewrite their intentions, and then find it impossible to keep to them ; they go here and there divagating, breathlessly pursuing deluding will-o'-the-wisps. But as one thinks over the books which Mrs. Gaskell produced, each so different, each so complete in turn, one is struck by her harmonious definiteness, and by the precision of detail, as well as by the breadth of her horizons.

III.

What a natural song is that of the people who are born with a gift for expression, for 'admiring rightly,' of the people who have listened to the many chords of life, who have gratefully enjoyed and delighted in them, and almost unconsciously discriminated in their admiration, discovering new secrets of happiness year by year.

They have passed on their way, perhaps, but they have not died with all their music in them ; their signs, their thoughts, their grateful voices are here ; they are teaching still and repeating the varied aspects of this world, to the generations in turn, as when King David looked up at the heavens where one day telleth another and one night certifieth another, where there is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them. So the silent revelation still continues, and goes out into all lands.

And, besides that gift of creation which belongs more specially to the race of poets, there is another power somewhat different in kind—that of vivid realisation. Some writers create their characters and rule over this dream-world of theirs as Prospero did in his island ; others seem to be rather the servants of their imaginations, and to be governed by their own fantasies. George Eliot was Shakespearean in the fact that she never seemed to become *subject* to her creations ; she was not afraid of being dull, she watched them from afar. She was not Dorothea any more

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than she was Milly Barton, or Catarina. Only once in Maggie Tulliver does she seem to be writing of herself. Mrs. Oliphant, in a like way, following on the steps of her beloved Sir Walter, never seems to be subject to her varied crowding characters, to the thronging eager companies of lads and lasses, and elders, and commentators. She, too, ruled in her kingdom.

But Mrs. Gaskell belongs to the other school; hers is a different inspiration and method. She seems for a time almost to be the character she is creating. Take Ruth, take Mr. Hale or Margaret, take, for instance, Sylvia's lover, Philip Hepburn, walking home on New Year's night along Monkshaven Common. The author not only knows what Philip, despairing of Sylvia's love, must have felt; she sees with his eyes, thinks with his thoughts.

Take that description of the merry-making at Corneys', and of Philip's return to the little town:

Shutting the door behind him, he went out into the dreary night and began his lonesome walk back to Monkshaven. The cold sleet almost blinded him as the sea-wind drove it straight in his face; it cut against him as it was blown with drifting force. The roar of the wintry sea came borne on the breeze; there was more light from the whitened ground than from the dark laden sky above. The field-paths would have been a matter of perplexity had it not been for the well-known gaps in the dyke-side, which showed the whitened land beyond, between the two dark stone walls. Yet he went clear and straight along his way, having unconsciously left all guidance to the animal instinct which co-exists with the human soul, and sometimes takes strange charge of the human body, when all the nobler powers of the individual are absorbed in acute suffering. At length he was in the lane, toiling up the hill, from which, by day, Monkshaven might be seen. Now all the features of the landscape before him were lost in the darkness of night, against which the white flakes came closer and nearer, thicker and faster. On a sudden, the bells of Monkshaven Church rang out a welcome to the new year, 1796. From the direction of the wind, it seemed as if the sound was flung with strength and power right into Philip's face. He walked down the hill to its merry sound—its merry sound, his heavy heart. As he entered the long High Street of Monkshaven he could see the watching lights put out in parlour, chamber, or kitchen. The new year had come, and expectation was ended. Reality had begun.

He turned to the right, into the court where he lodged with Alice Rose. There was a light still burning there, and cheerful voices were heard. He opened the door; Alice, her daughter, and Coulson stood as if awaiting him. Hester's wet cloak hung on a chair before the fire; she had her hood on, for she and Coulson had been to the watch-night.

The story of 'Sylvia's Lovers' is one of the later works, and should properly be mentioned after 'Cranford' and after 'North and South'; but, having begun to quote from it, I will still dwell for a minute upon this charming sea-piece—this Dutch picture,

with its lights, and tones, and delicate detail. Whitby itself is written down, painted in the bright atmosphere and varying colour. The fresh air blows, the boats pass and repass on the heaving tides, the fishermen in their big boots are all about, and the crowds and the Methodists of a century ago. We realise the busy turmoil, the abrupt downright thoroughness of the people, the stirring, and terrible, and most haunting facts of the early part of the nineteenth century. All is told, and yet told with what an instinctive gift and understanding of what to say and what to omit! The grim public events are brought in naturally, and weave into this remembrance of a wayward, loving girl, and the life's passion of her gloomy lover. Sylvia's home, her father, her mother, Kester the farm-hand, the very cows and their calves all live for us, as they must have lived for the writer. George du Maurier used to read the book with delight, and he loved the charming name of Sylvia. He used to speak of the story, I remember, with a sort of pride, as if it belonged to him, just as he himself belonged to Monkshaven, where he, too, worked and played, and delighted to be with his wife, and with his family round about him. One day as we walked along the quays he pointed out the Fosters' shop, and the road along which Sylvia must have come tripping from the farm to buy her red duffle cloak.

Mrs. Gaskell put herself into her stories; her emotions, her amusements all poured out from a full heart, and she retold the experience of her own loyal work among the poor, of her playtime among the well-to-do. And as she knew more and more she told better and better what she had lived through. She told the story of those she had known, of those she had loved—so, at least, it seems to some readers, coming after long years and re-reading more critically, perhaps, but with new admiration. Another fact about her is that she faced the many hard problems of her life's experience—faced them boldly, and set the example of writing to the point. It has been followed by how many with half her knowledge and insight, and without her generous purpose, taking grim subjects for art's sake rather than for humanity's sake, as she did.

'Mary Barton' and 'Ruth' are problem stories, and their very passion and protest may have partly defeated their object; and yet what influence have they not had in the enduring convictions of the age!

'Mary Barton' was the first book Mrs. Gaskell published,

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and it made her name. She was writing to divert her own sorrow for the loss of her only boy; her pages were alive with emotion and with the truths she wanted to urge. As the wife of the Unitarian minister in Manchester, she had been long living among the troubles of his people, and she had tried to share them with him. Now out of her own grief she was telling the story of the sorrows she had known, and telling it with what force and pathos, with what fresh vigour and generous pleading! My own father, and Dickens and Carlyle and Kingsley, all the leading critics of those days recognised her great gift at once and with warm plaudits; who indeed could read the story of 'Mary Barton' without admiration? There is one special episode in the book, of a little boat pursuing the great ship into the open sea, which completely carries the imagination away. 'Mary Barton' is a tract as well as a most moving and irresistible story. 'Ruth' is a tract combined with a picture-book—too much of a tract perhaps to carry absolute conviction.

The pictures in the beginning of the story of 'Ruth' must have been images of Mrs. Gaskell's own childhood, so brightly touched are they. Mrs. Gaskell was a young woman when she wrote. The landscapes are irradiate with the life and the dazzling colours of early prime—as in this picture from an old farmhouse :

In those days the house-place had been a cheerful room, full of life, with the passing to and fro of husband, child, and servants; with a great merry wood-fire crackling and blazing away every evening, and hardly let out in the very heat of summer; for with the thick stone walls, and the deep window-seats, and the drapery of vine-leaves and ivy, that room, with its flag-floor, seemed always to want the sparkle and cheery warmth of a fire. But now the green shadows from without seemed to have become black in the uninhabited desolation. The oaken shovel-board, the heavy dresser, and the carved cupboards were now dull and damp, which were formerly polished up to the brightness of a looking-glass where the fire-blaze was for ever glinting; they only added to the oppressive gloom; the flag-floor was wet with heavy moisture. Ruth stood gazing into the room, seeing nothing of what was present. She saw a vision of former days—an evening in the days of her childhood; her father sitting in the 'master's corner' near the fire, sedately smoking his pipe, while he dreamily watched his wife and child; her mother reading to her, as she sat on a little stool at her feet. It was gone—all gone into the land of shadows; but for the moment it seemed so present in the old room that Ruth believed her actual life to be the dream.

Here is another sketch from that same country place :

Again they stood together at the top of a steep ascent, 'the hill' of the hundred. At the summit there was a level space, sixty or seventy yards square, of unenclosed and broken ground, over which the golden bloom of the gorse cast a rich hue, while its delicious scent perfumed the fresh and nimble air. On

one side of this common the ground sloped down to a clear bright pond in which were mirrored the rough sand-cliffs that rose abrupt on the opposite bank; hundreds of martens found a home there, and were now wheeling over the transparent water, and dipping in their wings in their evening sport. Indeed, all sorts of birds seemed to haunt the lonely pool; the water-wagtails were scattered around its margin, the linnets perched on the topmost sprays of the gorse-bushes, and other hidden warblers sang their vespers on the uneven ground beyond. . . .

All this landscape is lived and fondly remembered, not noted by a passing traveller and studied from a literary point of view. The old country house, which I once saw, stands within a mile or two of Cranford, known to how many of us; of Hollingford, the little straggling town where Mr. Gibson came and went, tending the sick and travelling on his beneficent rounds. That same town is also known as Knutsford by others. That the three places are one and the same none need ever doubt, and from this little northern stronghold of kindly wit and enterprise, sons and daughters have gone forth to take their place in the world, among whom many a trusted well-known name belongs to Dr. Gibson's race and kin.

The old country house where Lord Clive as a boy, at the risk of his life, used to leap from one stone pier to another; where the grandchildren of the Holland family, and Mrs. Gaskell among them, have played before starting out into the world, is still standing. One of the Hollands, a son's son, so loved the old country where his grandfather had dwelt, that when, after long service in the House of Commons, he was raised to the House of Lords, he chose to be called by none other but the familiar name of Knutsford, a name which will be also ever associated with the goodness and noble beauty of her who shared it for so long.

IV.

As one looks over the list of Mrs. Gaskell's books in the order in which they come, one cannot but see how they gain in maturity as they advance.

I can think of no other instance of one woman of mark doing so much honour and justice to another, as Mrs. Gaskell did when she wrote the history of Charlotte Brontë. It is true that memoirs, even dull ones, are the most fascinating of all reading. They are certainly cheering literature for those who chiefly remember and who can put a certain life into the dry pages which concern those they have known; but Mrs. Gaskell's life of Charlotte Brontë

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is a book, not for those who remember only, but for the young who are learning still ; for generations yet to be born. It is no mere list of events with dates and adjectives, but an actual aspect of life flashed and recreated there before us—we see the landscape, we breathe the atmosphere of weird dreams and of grim reality.

If Mrs. Gaskell trusted too much to the vivid emphasis of a genius such as Charlotte Brontë's when she took some of her impressions for facts, and wrote of Branwell's hallucinations as though they had ever had a real existence, who will not feel for her and for the troubles that ensued ? Charlotte Brontë had her passionate prejudices brought about by the very exclusiveness of her circumstances and character ; but one likes to realise what happiness she must have found in her later days in the success of her work, in the encouragement of her publishers, and in Mrs. Gaskell's protecting element of common sense and kindly friendship.

My space is almost at an end, and I feel as if I had only begun my say. Where is the just tribute to that fine novel of 'North and South,' that book so well conceived, so bravely expressed, attacking great problems and speaking openly at a time when most people were still afraid to speak ? Where is the critic's admiration for many of those shorter stories ? One would like to dwell upon each in turn, and on 'Cranford' and its beloved and amusing world, to be found again described, only with greater depth and feeling in 'Wives and Daughters,' where we find it progressing still and making the most of its independent spirit.

Was there ever such a type of the wise country doctor as Mr. Gibson, such a charmer as Cynthia ? A statue might be erected to Mrs. Gibson in the market-place of Hollingford, if all the people who have been amused by her were to subscribe. How edifying are her views when conversing with Osborne Hamley, and Cynthia is thanking him for some flowers ! 'Oh,' says Osborne, 'you must not thank me exclusively ; I believe it was my thought, but Roger took all the trouble of it.' 'I consider the thought was everything,' said Mrs. Gibson ; 'thought is spiritual, while action is merely material.' 'This fine sentence took the speaker herself by surprise.' We also know her pensive speculations to Molly as to what would have happened if Molly's dear mother had lived and Mr. Kirkpatrick her own dear first husband also, and if they had married each other, and she herself had been Molly's mamma.

As for Molly Gibson, she is the dearest of heroines, a born lady, unconsciously noble and generous in every thought—it makes one the happier to know that Mollys exist, even in fiction, and one is grateful to those who can depict such characters from their own vivid perceptions and experience.

Mrs. Gaskell wrote not only to make people happier but also to teach the truth as she felt it. A critic, speaking of the novels of '48, has quoted Job Legh's saying out of 'Mary Barton' as a text: 'To my thinking them that is strong in any of God's gifts is meant to help the weak!' This same critic continues: 'As the sonnet which had been as a lute for lovers became in Milton's hands a trumpet, so (in Mrs. Gaskell's time) the novel which had once been (and was to be again) a toy, became a sword with which to fight the cause of the oppressed.'

We must look to the people who can see to be our guides—not to the blind leading the blind, not to the fanciful, to the impatient, to the purblind pointing to arid places, to wastes and abysses, to impossible short cuts which lead to sloughs of despond. Mrs. Gaskell could see the sloughs plainly enough, but she seemed instinctively to discover the stepping-stones, the clues out of the labyrinth, the merry, friendly, loving solutions which life presents; the happy possibilities still existing for each one of us if we did not always insist upon being our own tragedies.

The last pages of 'Cousin Phillis,' with the autumnal skies and the fragrant country horizons, contain true wisdom and philosophy. All the frenzies, all the dissections of the modern school can say no more:

'Now, Phillis,' said old Betty, coming up to the sofa, 'we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself.' . . .

Since writing this, I have come upon an old friend's criticism, printed at the end of 'Wives and Daughters,' which I cannot but quote in conclusion:

While you read Mrs. Gaskell's last three books [he says], you feel yourself caught out of an abominable wicked world into one in which there is much weakness, many mistakes, sufferings long and bitter, but in which it is possible for people to live calm and wholesome lives; and what is more, you feel this is at least as real a world as the other. *The kindly spirit which thinks no ill looks out of her pages irradiate.* . . .

THE HERO OF ROMANCE.¹

'Lastly, there was one Actor, described as an Hero of the first Rate among the Aurunci.'—*Bayle's Dictionary*.

MR. AGAR QUINN had arrived early and easily at success—theatrical success. The younger son of an Irish peer who had mortgaged his estates to a Semitic gentleman and then doubled his original capital by marrying the mortgagee's daughter, he had inherited from his parents many of those qualities which serve and comfort man in his pilgrimage through this vale of tears. He was handsome in a slapdash taking way: one eye looked at you merrily while the other cast a sentimental beam round the corner, yet you could not say he squinted: rather was it charm. Also he could act from the tip of his topgallant curl to his artificially pointed toes without too obviously imitating the action of the semaphore. He inherited from his mother a lively taste in clothes, and from his father a judgment which forbade abasement to it; the result was that his outward man suggested one of Ouida's less flamboyant guardsmen; indeed he would have passed for a gentleman had he been a trifle less distinguished.

Socially it was his misfortune to attract attention; on the stage it was his master card: his voice, too, in a man of even less passable appearance would have carried him far: he could woo and win, preach and deplore and banter in tones exquisitely musical to the ear and only wanting in conviction through his frequent difficulty in remembering his lines. This forgetfulness was excusable, for he played but one part, and it was difficult to keep in mind which drama he was decorating at the moment. He was the ideal hero of romance; for choice the military or naval hero: though he had been known to enact the clerical hero in a manner so attractive to the cloth that at least two earnest young priests had taken to the stage, under the impression that there in truth must be the higher life.

Oddly enough, though in his early days he had been as mildly rakish as other callow actors, he had learned, with the wearing years, to think of himself as this virtuous young hero whose characteristics

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he had so long and so happily interpreted, and he made it a rule in his private life not merely to be as young, but also to be as heroic and as virtuous as circumstances would permit. He was in consequence a pleasing player, a capital good fellow, and a worthy citizen.

At fifty-seven he was yet unmarried, claiming that celibacy was essential to the love of art, but really because of his coquetry, which, though he never answered one of them, forbade him to stem the current of love letters from the thin young ladies in the dress circle, and the stouter but not so young ladies in the stalls. Mayhap to marry would have been to betray the secret of that hair tonic, not a dye, which inspired that topgallant curl, and the art that concealed art in his toes. He thought, perchance, he might, however virtuous, not always be young and heroic to a wife, and that to be mercurial is worse than useless when the glass falls. Withal the man's mind kept really young and sunny, and his healthy, well-groomed, not greatly taxed body carried itself with a spring even on the street side of the stage door. You saw at a glance that he had a high idea of his art and of himself;—you said he was vain but a fine young fellow. And so had your father said before you.

Yet one day, or rather one evening, towards the end of the century, a terrible thing happened; the irresponsible understudy of a leading critic discovered that Mr. Agar Quinn was extremely stiff in his joints. This was said of Mr. Quinn in one of his best parts, the hero of 'The Barrack Beau,' a drama in which the battles of Alma and Balaclava were rolled into one so that Mr. Quinn might be heroic on horse and foot without destroying the unities of place and time. This libel, through the remissness of the Advertisement Manager, appeared in the paper. The irresponsible understudy was dismissed, the editor apologised; but the mischief was done, the line was noted and quoted, and attributed of course to the leading critic. Some said they wondered Mr. Quinn's debility had not been noticed before, others claimed to have noticed it all along. One disreputable rag talked openly of rheumatic gout, not surprising in a man of middle age. And that very week 'The Barrack Beau' was withdrawn in the height of its success. The theatre was closed, and the world—the theatrical world—was startled by the rumour that Mr. Agar Quinn had retired from the stage. 'Mr. Quinn,' was the commentary of the disreputable paper, 'has done well to realise that even the cleverest humbug in the world cannot be young and heroic at sixty.'

Mr. Quinn's friends, with no less truth, alleged in reply that he had not retired from the stage, that he was no humbug, that he was not sixty, and furthermore that if he lived to be a hundred he would always remain the finest hero of romance the British theatre had ever seen. All that officially was said on behalf of Mr. Quinn was that overwork had wrought upon him a nervous breakdown, which necessitated his temporary retirement from the public service, but that he cherished the hope of an early return to the scene of his artistic labours.

And then war broke out, and for all that the public cared or remembered about Mr. Quinn he might have died of old age. In theatrical circles it was supposed that he had lost heavily in Kaffirs (his professional position was admittedly sound), and had booked an American or Colonial tour to right himself, while he evaded the pressure of creditors. The hypothesis was not probable, but none had the high-flying thought to conceive that Mr. Quinn's vanity was equal to the flinging away of the ten or fifteen thousand pounds ready to his hand in 'The Barrack Beau.' Actors had done many foolish things through egoism, but no instance could be recalled of an actor-manager abandoning a successful production because of one purely personal and impertinent criticism; the fact is, everyone, even his greatest admirers, believed in Agar Quinn as a triumphant blagueur—humbug in the vulgar language. Nobody believed in his ideals save one—and that was Mr. Agar Quinn.

The war broke out and found Mr. Quinn not in America nor in the Colonies, nor planning a voyage to any of these places; it found him in Ireland, a remote part of Ireland to which he had retired to play melancholy Jaques with a greater zest than he had ever played Orlando. He had fled the haunts of men to nurse his wounded pride; if incidentally he could regain his wasted tissue and renew the youthful bloom of his outer man, harmonising the form to the spirit, co-ordinating the veteran limbs once more with the Dionysian brain, then he might revisit the scene of his triumphs—if not there was for him but gentle oblivion, trout streams to whip scaring the swimmers, hounds to follow at a gentlemanly distance, and books, poetry books, which he might read aloud to himself ruminating the while on what the world had lost.

The war trumpet stirred him from his slumber, and called him, as the bells of the fire brigade call the child to follow. Not that

it occurred to him at once to follow it further or otherwise than in the newspapers. He was profoundly stirred at the thought of forty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay ; he bought a map to see where it was, and wondered how they all could find occupation in so insignificant a place ; he turned up his back numbers of the papers to discover, if he could, what the war was about. In this he failed, but war, he reflected, whatever its cause, was in itself a glorious thing, and he was proud to call himself an Englishman. When a subaltern he met in the hunting field bade a hound remember Majuba, he cried, ' Ah yes ; the days of the Duke ! ' understanding that Majuba was a Peninsular victory, fought on a hill like Albuera.

His view of politics was of course entirely dramatic and sentimental ; he deemed the finest character in the history of Ireland to be Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who had died for that picturesquely unhappy country in a highly affecting and effective manner, also he had wept over the fate of Robert Emmet and contemplated the presentation of a play combining the pathos of his career with a happy ending. But rebellion which took the form of deliberately facing the power of Britain and defeating it was to him, indeed, the sin of witchcraft ; for he had believed all his life that without witchcraft she could not be beaten, and that a triumph over her was not a victory but a sorcery. He was, in consequence, sorely puzzled by the early news from the front, though he at first persuaded himself that the enemy had bought the press.

And then came the Christmas when the world laughed to see that England could sow dragons' teeth faster than she could mow them down. There is no need to recall sinister names ; three sank into Mr. Quinn's heart and threatened to poison his whole system. They set him day after day galloping across country, riding over imaginary foemen with beards. To have hair upon your face just then was to make an enemy of the actor ; for himself he was more severely shaven than ever. For one fortnight he was entirely without the use of that reason which had made him so successful an actor-manager ; the most whimsically quixotic notions bedevilled his fancy without his being able to grasp one of them. They crystallised on the morning of Boxing Day when, opening his ' Irish Times,' he read the advertisement appealing for the yeomen of these isles to mount and ride.

' Capital,' quoth Mr. Quinn, ' capital,' smiting the paper swashing blows with his approving hand. ' Now at last we shall see

the gallants of England strike home for' whatever it was . . . 'And,' added Mr. Quinn, flinging his lithe figure a look in the cheval glass, 'we shall see whether a particular friend of ours can play the young hero or not.'

That very day Agar Quinn renewed his youth; his youth of temperament, that is to say. He sat down at his breakfast table with pen, ink and paper, between the toast rack and the digestive medicine, to write his application, and the rest of the day he spent on a battue of empty Contrexéville bottles in the meadow behind the stables. He also practised galloping round the meadow, rifle in hand, snapping at the mark—unloaded, of course, for he was not inhumane. That night he passed in glorious slumber on an imaginary field strewn with the victims of his bow and spear.

The following days whirled away in the repetition of such martial exploits, diversified with sword exercises on a Limerick ham in the kitchen and a little mapping and field-sketching in the garden. In these few days he learned as much about soldiering, ceremonial and routine duties apart, as many soldiers ever know. And the joy of this new interest in life made him not only feel but look quite young again.

It was a strapping, hearty squireen whose attestation paper the cavalry sergeant at Newbridge filled in for him. 'Age?' enquired the sergeant.

'Twenty-five the other day,' said Agar Quinn. On the stage he had never been older.

The sergeant looked up. 'Any relation of Captain Quinn we lost at Omdurman?'

'The poor lad,' sighed Agar, with a suspicion of pride, 'was my nephew.'

'Why,' said the sergeant bluntly, 'he was older than you.'

'Quite so,' returned Mr. Quinn with that plausibility which had helped to make his reputation, 'but I was his uncle oddly enough.'

'They did say he had an uncle a play actor,' said the sergeant. 'But he was such a gentlemanly young fellow I dursent think it was true.'

'Why,' exclaimed Mr. Quinn, indignantly, 'why should not an actor be a gentleman?'

'Don't know, I'm sure,' said the sergeant, 'but maybe you'd come round to our canteen and we'll drink to poor Captain Quinn's prosperity in the better world, this being good enough for the

likes of us.' At the door of the canteen he paused to protest. 'Don't you go on telling people you was his uncle, or someone that knows the facts may call you a liar. That's our way in the army.'

And Mr. Quinn, swallowing his pride, gulped down on top of it a bumper of liver-tormenting beer. He nearly choked.

They were glad enough, however, to take Agar Quinn as a yeoman, for apart from one or two applicants who had seen a little service in the Wild Lone Land with police, or chased Dacoits in Burma, there was not one of them all who looked so good a soldier. Nor were his cavalry virtues entirely superficial, for when the aspiring squires were trotted over to the Curragh none rode with a better seat than he. The Sergeant on the flank fancied a stiffness in the mount and dismount, but when the critical moment came, when suddenly at full gallop rang out the startling 'Halt,' at which trained horses stood while untrained riders pursued the tenor of their way, Agar Quinn came blithely to rest without turning a hair.

'This ain't the first time you've been there,' the sergeant swore, and Mr. Quinn smiled, not caring to boast how night after night he had charged the Russian guns home to the very back wall of his theatre, with nothing but his skill in horsemanship to save him from plunging from the sublime to the ridiculous through the emergency exit into the Strand.

So far so good. Agar Quinn could ride as well as most, and shot no worse than some who passed the tests. The doctors had smiled at his stated age of twenty-five, but the man rang sound under examination, being in the very pink of condition, and the rest was a matter for his conscience; not the duty of medicine was it to nose out an objection to an obviously desirable recruit.

There followed strange days and nights which Mr. Quinn loyally strove to enjoy. He told himself it was a splendid company of young gallants among whom he was fallen; he won immense popularity, and his popularity, showing itself in the pouring of libations, which is the young gallant's only form of offering to his own sex, his liver descended into purgatory, there to be chained until, it seemed an æon afterwards, the scene of active operations was reached, and the sphere of whisky influence left behind, with all the things that were and that for some should never be again.

Sometimes during these days in Dublin, and at the Curragh, and on the troopship, Agar Quinn declared unto himself that he had

never felt so young. More often, and yet more often as night followed night on the spine-bruising barrack bed or in the storm-tossed hammock, he wondered if it was senile decay that had betrayed him into this folly, and doomed him to this nightmare of simulated youth. For three hours in each of six days of the week the magnetism of the theatre had galvanised him into sprightliness, but to dash through life all day and every day was dashing to destruction. Still he chased the bubble bravely, and no one doubted yet. His comrades thought him a man with a sentimental grief at heart tending to age him prematurely—it was not unnoticed that he alone had none to wave him a good-bye; they never dreamt he was a man kept young by the loving only of himself.

To selfishness of the blatant type, which alone is patent to the vulgar, Mr. Quinn was a stranger; his egoism allowed him to suffer discomfort and even pain without complaint; but he had not counted on suffering without applause. Hardship troubled him less than the absence of recognition; others besides the Lancer sergeant had asked him if he were related to the victim of Omdurman, more had sought out his connection with Lord Glounthaume, but not one man had dreamt of any link between him and himself. His last act at Liverpool was to buy every journal to be had on the landing stage; from first to last none mentioned his name. Agar Quinn the famous actor was sunk utterly in Agar Quinn the young yeoman; he told himself that was all he desired, and the troopship lumbered down the black Mersey to the green Channel and the blue Atlantic, and with each changing hue there snapped a further bond between him and the world he thought he knew.

The spirit of romance in Agar Quinn withstood the voyage out, and even gathered strength amidst the stir and tumult of the camp at Maitland, but it died in action the first day the Yeomen came under fire; for that was their first fight and the last, and the end of it saw these flowers of English chivalry culled by the enemy. Agar was petrified at the news that the white flag had gone up. 'Foxhunters!' he called to his fellows in distress; 'surely we can do as well as the fox.'

For answer they bade him go to the devil his own way, and they laid down their arms.

That did not seem good to Agar Quinn. The heroism so convincing in the theatre might not avail him here, but he held that death even from behind, even in flight, was less ignominious than

this tame surrender, this bargaining for mercy, this chaffery of pride. Stealing away from his companions ere the firing had yet quite stilled, he reached the spot where his horse was picketed. Then he mounted and he spurred. He was soon espied, and the bullets followed fast, but the practice of the victors at the end of a long fight on such a swift-moving mark was wanting in accuracy; the lead came near, near enough to graze and sting, but not so near as to slay.

Mr. Quinn had been from boyhood a horseman, he had ridden for love, for pleasure, for courtesy, for vanity, for pay, but never before for life and liberty, and if he had ridden faster with less object the fault lay not in him but in his mount, a narrow-chested Hungarian horse of humble parentage and no ambition. He asked himself not whither he rode nor why, he cared not whether the chasing bullets overtook and slew him, but one thing he would not do, and that was yield his living body to the foe. All his life long he had upheld the ideal of English heroism, he would not abandon it now in the shadow of death. His desperate eyes saw a mirage of British armies rise from the desert, he called them to save his lost companions, to rescue them ere their shame should be blown abroad on the winds of Heaven. He wheeled his horse to put himself at their head and lead them on. The little Hungarian, checked in his stride, went down, with his foot in a hole, and Agar Quinn, spent and unheeding, crashed earthwards on his head.

It never came into Agar Quinn's knowledge how long he lay senseless on the veldt; he might have stayed till his whitened bones signalled for burial had it not been for the chance straying of a drunken Kaffir who, stumbling over his prostrate form, contemptuously kicked him for a dead Khaki.

The next instant he cowered in terror; for the figure suddenly rose to a majestic height, showing the face of a man with silvered hair and beard, who cried in awful tones, 'Down, damned dog, cry mercy, or by Heaven . . .'

The Kaffir gathered enough of his threat to cry mercy most vociferously. He did not realise that the gaunt spectre menacing him with such fearful conviction was unable, through physical weakness, to complete his sentence of condemnation. He bent in supplication as to an unknown god. And the white-haired wraith of Agar Quinn, the actor, was appeased, and lay down since he could not stand.

In his flask there lingered a dram of brandy, which swallowed

gave him the strength to live until the Kaffir found help on the veldt track miles away. And so wore hours and days away in a mingled joy and misery of fever, ending in the discovery that he lay in a real bed for the first time in many months.

Slowly, exceeding slowly and most toilsomely, did Agar Quinn gather the threads of his own past. Through his fever he had been obsessed by the too close company of a man with a beard which kept brushing against his face; he vaguely believed it a cruel jest of the foe, for he held ever the recollection that there had been a battle and he had ridden away. Why he had ridden away it was impossible to understand, for he was not the man to turn his back on an honourable encounter, and the recollection of the surrender he rejected as sheer fantasy. His companions in arms had their faults; considering that they were gentlemen born he would have liked them to be more sober, less vulgar in their pleasure and in their jests, less greedy about their food (for he had been shocked by the dishonourable manner in which some treated the emergency ration), in fine they were not as good an example to the poor kerns and gallowglasses as he thought gentlemen ought to be. But that they should have laid down their arms while a man remained who could load and fire was unthinkable, as unthinkable as that he himself should have turned tail and fled. Yet here he was clearly a prisoner to the enemy, though a well-treated and an honoured one—too honoured, he suspected, for them to have taken him for a mere trooper of Yeomanry. The mystery was inscrutable.

The first point upon which light broke in was the beard that had brushed his face. He was startled to find it was his own, and yet more startled to see it was quite white; not Hamlet peered at him from his mirror but King Lear. If nature could make him look like that, he thought, then nature might bring anything about; even the defeat and shame and surrender of a force composed of English gentlemen. The face he saw was not only old but senile. It was his face, he told himself. Perhaps he was too old, perhaps he had lost heart, perhaps— But the others were young and hearty; the others were what for a generation past he had pretended to be.

At first he had demanded a razor that he might rid himself of the offending beard, and shed peevish tears because he could not understand their reasons for refusing him one. But as time wore on, and in his mind and frenzied memory was framed a damning

charge against himself, he grew willing that it should remain. He no longer wished to admire the countenance of that Agar Quinn who had run away. 'Damn the fellow,' he said to himself with a last faint shimmer of humour, 'the graceless dog is better dead.'

The little town where Agar found himself lay in what may be called the zone of the enemy; that is to say from time to time it was held by the British, but until the very end never for long; sometimes it might serve as the pivot of a sweeping movement, but after two or three attempts (attested by mouldering heaps of cartridge cases and other heaps that mouldered under no great monument) to garrison, it was acknowledged to be too remote for this honour, and so was considered by the enemy as suitable for prisoners unlikely, whether through disability or disinclination, to seek the firing line again. But chiefly there lay there men wounded and sick from both sides of the field, joined in a bitter brotherhood of pain and regret, and equally willing to yield to the hangman the apologists of their parties.

But from all these Agar Quinn held himself aloof; he dared not seek his fellows lest he should hear ill of his dead self, for his egoism, taking a fresh phase, made him the shame of the army. He was convinced that search would be made for the man who bolted, at least there would be inquiry as to his name and personality, and sooner or later the world would know (and with what ribaldry receive the news) that Mr. Agar Quinn, the hero of fifty romances, had tried to be a hero in reality and . . . and ran away.

The rough countrywoman who tended him thought he was very old; let her think so. He, for his part, thought her very old, though she was young enough to be his daughter; hard work, under a hot sun, had given her the aspect of elderliness; sudden discomfort, amounting in his view to torture, had sapped the Indian summer of his vigour, and the mental torment of disgrace had carved deep the furrows which flying years had but traced, while nature's magic triumphing over art's had turned him into a greybeard. Yet the spirit of art remained alive within him, and since belated Nemesis had made him an old man he was determined he should be a dignified and beautiful old man. He asked no longer a razor; he was well contented with a comb and brush and scissors; he found comfort and had pride in the discovery that his ancient trouble of incipient baldness no longer menaced the comeliness of his appearance. In fine he forgot that he was an old actor in the intoxication of playing a new part.

Only he was puzzled to know what his gaoler hosts made of this ancient man who had come among them clad in the uniform of an aristocratic if unfortunate band of warriors. He had dreaded to ask what was become of this costume, finding himself now provided with clothes which might have rendered the village schoolmaster fashionable of a Sunday. He was still puzzling when something that forbade his shrinking longer from his kind came down in the night upon the little hapless town. He did not at once recognise this visitant under the name of 'Typheuse Koorts;' he took this for the name of a woman; he thought it a pretty name; he vaguely wished to meet her. Only when his doctor came no more, and he learned that Typheuse Koorts had slain him did he understand that the visitor was enteric.

And then Aasvogelsfontein (let us call it that), which hitherto had seemed through the window a bustling little place—for maimed men, even the one-legged, can bustle with the best, and bustling make more noise with their cloppety clomp of stick and crutch—hushed down in the stillness of that unwarlike death that shadows and mocks the pomp of war. The swaggering fellows whose constitution had survived the shell splinter, the splayed bullet, the sword thrust and even the surgeon's more deadly steel, lay down and miserably died.

And with this epidemic there came into demand at Aasvogelsfontein the services of a profession rarely desired at other times. There had been two predikants there, but one was killed in action a week or two after his harmonium case had gone to light a British bivouac, and the other, a very modern young man who had studied at Utrecht and was suspected of heterodoxy, found that, there being but twenty-four hours to the day, men in khaki were dying in doubt of the mercy of God. And though he would no word let drop as to the justice or injustice of the war, in his heart he thought, were he a khaki soldier, he would most pitably fear the coming of death. Therefore he attended rather to their sick beds than to those of his own people.

But it came to the young predikant's ear that there was an elderly meneer among the prisoners who was given to reading to himself from what appeared to his nurse to be a pocket Testament, and the predikant jumped to the conclusion she already had formed that this must be an English chaplain. So he snatched a moment to visit him and ask his aid.

His first knowledge of Mr. Quinn took the form of these lines that melodied through his window :

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise !
One thing at least is certain—*This Life flies ;*
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies ;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

The young predikant said to himself that it might be a paraphrase of the preacher. He did not think it was. He entered and found Agar Quinn in tears.

The actor rose and bowed. 'Whoever you are, sir,' said he, politely to the intruder, 'you will understand that my emotion arises not from seeing you but from reading poetry.' He held up a little book.

'Poetry,' echoed the predikant ; 'not a Bible ?'

'If I may call it so,' replied Mr. Quinn, 'my Bible. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.'

'Then, Sir,' said the predikant, 'you are not in Holy Orders ?'

'Orders,' exclaimed Mr. Quinn, 'Orders.' He considered the proposition carefully and decided that he was not in Holy Orders. He said so frankly, apologised for not so being, and expressed the opinion that it was a noble calling.

'You excuse me,' bowed the predikant, and turned away. Then he hesitated. 'You excuse me,' he said again. 'You have a beautiful voice.' He thought but did not add, a beautiful presence.

Agar Quinn brightened and fluttered. 'Positively I do declare I fear you flatter me,' he crowed.

'You know the Bible, sir ?' demanded the predikant half sternly, half nervously. 'I mean the common Bible—the Scriptures.'

'Hardly off by heart, I fear,' said Mr. Quinn, 'but I have read it in my time . . . not through at a sitting.' Pride flashed in his eye. 'I think I could repeat the Ten Commandments.'

'I ask you not to do that,' declared the predikant. 'I ask, I think to ask, is it in your heart to soothe and comfort the death-bed of your foes ?'

'Why, certainly,' beamed Mr. Quinn, 'I shall be delighted.'

'It is not a work to delight,' said the predikant, 'it is to make the heart weary and sad.'

'I assure you,' quoth Mr. Quinn gravely, 'I quite understand there must be no levity. I do not scorn my foes, I am sorry they should have been so misguided as to fight against me.'

'We talk not of that, sir,' said the predikant shortly.

'Of course not,' replied Mr. Quinn. 'The thoughts of the dying should be directed to the world to come, and as far as possible alienated from temporal considerations.' He smiled graciously. 'You see, though I be no more than a war-worn veteran I have given thought to other matters. . . . But what if they repent of their foolishness and wrongdoing, what must I say to them then?'

'You will not have the pain of hearing contrition,' said the predikant. 'All I ask is that you should use your beautiful voice to read to them from the Holy Book.'

'You really think I can do no more than that?' asked Agar, less eagerly.

'You can do no more that will be useful,' said the predikant. Agar reflected a moment. 'I fear my Dutch is not yet perfect,' said he, 'so I had better read from the Vulgate, had I not?'

'No, no; read in English,' rejoined the predikant hastily.

'But,' argued Mr. Quinn, 'my Latin pronunciation is really good; the Archbishop of Westminster was kind enough to praise it.'

'Everyone will understand English and none Latin,' said the predikant, taking his leave.

'But don't you think, sir,' was Agar's last effort at persuasion, 'that in a case of this kind, where it is a question of comforting the dying, that Latin is the more soothing language of the two?'

'Sir,' said the predikant, with a sharpness that in Mr. Quinn's opinion touched discourtesy, 'will you do what I ask or will you not?'

'Oh, certainly,' said Mr. Quinn, 'certainly. I only ventured to offer an opinion. I do not question that you are more expert in these matters than I. Believe me, my dear and reverend sir, my poor services are entirely at your disposal.'

And so an English Bible was found for Mr. Agar Quinn, and with that in his hand and a throat pastille in his mouth he went forth to comfort the dying. As he led the way, the predikant heard him tragically murmur,

'Haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to Heaven.'

'I beg you,' the predikant earnestly warned him, 'not to talk of shrieving or aught papistical. These poor sufferers will listen

to the word of God, even from an Englishman, but they will listen to nothing else.'

'I understand,' said Mr. Quinn loftily, 'I understand. You can trust me to pick out something that is at once interesting and elevating. Believe me, I know well what is wanted here.'

'I hope so, sir,' said the young predikant, and a minute later Mr. Quinn found himself by the bedside of a man who seemed to Agar all skull and beard, save for two sharp eyes that looked at him spitefully from between the two. By his bed there hung his wooden leg, neatly advertising a firm in London City.

'English, eh?' came out of the beard. 'Not an English doctor, I hope. No, they cut off my leg so that I couldn't fight any more. I was too much for the English soldiers, I was, but the English doctors were too much for me. Now I'm dying. Yes, I'm nearly dead, thank God. Going to read the Bible to me? I don't mind, but if you want to read much you'd better hurry up. All right, sit down. Fire away.'

Agar Quinn had not foreseen a reception of this nature, and his wits were awry as he sat down and with a trembling hand opened the book at the first page, cleared his throat and began: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

'And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. . . .'

'Mr. Englishman,' was snapped out from the beard, 'drawl along like that and I'll be dead before you come to the Day of Rest. And what do I care how the world was made? Least said about that the better. If you're going to read to me, read how the Chosen People smote the Philistines—there's sense and comfort in that.'

'I do not clearly recall where these particulars are to be found,' Mr. Quinn admitted, fumbling the book ineffectually.

'You aren't a great hand at your job,' protested the dying man, 'not to be able to find the Philistines. Look up anything about our God being a God of war and read me that.'

Quite anxiously Agar Quinn searched for something of a military nature to please the ear of this difficult audience. He did not clearly see how it would soothe the dying spirit, but for want of something better he turned to Joshua and laid siege to Jericho. 'And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of

rams' horns ; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. . . .'

Agar drew a long breath. 'I had no idea the language was so speakable,' he said, and the resonance grew in his voice as he read on with fervour : 'And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the rams' horns, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout ; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. . . .'

'That is good,' snapped the patient, 'that is good, and you read it good for an Englishman. You believe it all ; you make me believe, though of late I had doubt.'

Agar sought to explain that the alpha of art was to carry conviction, but the man did not even try to understand. 'Read on, read on,' he cried, and said no more until Agar chanted forth : 'So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets : and it came to pass when the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

'And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.'

'Ai !' roared the dying man with a volcanic sigh, 'had we but made that with Johannesburg !'

And he said no more, and when Mr. Quinn had voiced the last verse : 'So the Lord was with Joshua ; and his fame was noised throughout all the country,' and waited for the applause it came not, for the one-legged man was dead in the triumph over Jericho.

'How dramatic,' said Agar Quinn, 'that the man should go off like that !'

He found that all the sick men chose, all who had any choice, the most clamorous passages of the Old Testament as their consolation in the hour of death, or of threatened death ; for some few grew better when inspirited by the voice of Agar Quinn declaiming the words of the Prophets.

Though at first Agar was well pleased with his success, and rioted gaily through the clash of iron, the braying of trumpets, and shouting of the captains, and was proud to find his voice still equal to the deep bass which he associated with the more striking rôles, yet after a day or two he wearied and found the work monotonous. He thought it but a vulgar taste that would have him for

ever bellowing forth maledictions upon the Philistines; he had even some misgiving that it was inappropriate to the occasion. He was mildly shocked at the idea of all these men going to their account with fury and revenge in their hearts; they called themselves Christians and, if there was any meaning in their Christianity, surely, however they might have been misled into considering themselves as injured, it was now their cue to express forgiveness of their enemies, and to hope that all would march shoulder to shoulder in the Company of Heaven.

Their bodies are dust, their swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, we trust.

That Mr. Agar Quinn conceived to be the true spirit of the Christian soldier. He was disappointed to find nothing at all like it in the Old Testament, though almost every other emotion was artistically portrayed. He reflected, however, that it was probably not written by Christians, and the thought inspired him to search the New.

He read it aloud to himself, for things read only with the eye never reached his comprehension, and was disappointed to find the language much less sonorous; still, it had a charm of its own, And he read on.

'Pon my word,' said Mr. Quinn, blinking his eyes, 'some of this is very well expressed . . . most affecting, it is, indeed.' He marvelled that men on the threshold of eternity should prefer the big drum of the Old Testament to the lute-like music of Saint Mark. 'Surely,' said he, 'there will be some that I can make listen to this.'

His face, which was growing older every day, wore a brighter aspect as he went forth on this new mission. Not very fortunate was he in the subject of his first experiment; this was a relative of the one-legged man who had perished in the breach at Jericho, but an even fiercer warrior and a brandy drinker withal.

His greeting when Mr. Quinn, his finger in his book, drew nigh was, 'Damned hypocritical Englishman, I know you, you swine.'

As lately as but yesterday Mr. Quinn might have been offended by such words, but though for a moment he stayed his advance, he was not repulsed. 'Patience, my dear sir, patience,' he murmured soothingly through a volley of oaths which followed the first discharge. And when the fury had spent itself Mr. Quinn very

gently, and still standing by the bedside, for he was afraid to take a seat, began to read the twelfth chapter of Saint Mark.

The first verses were delivered against a counterpoint of grunted protest that lost heart as Agar, in nervous yet silvery tones, read on; but at the eleventh verse Agar was called on to obey a growled 'Sit down,' and he read without further interruption until the thirty-first, when he was conscious of the fire-eater's fingers creeping round his and, at the thirty-fourth, of a hot drop that fell on his hand. At the end of the chapter the man was asleep and snoring, and Agar sat beside him, most uncomfortably, but fearful to stir because of the sick man's grip on his hand.

This man recovered, as did many others that Agar visited in the ghostly company of Mark or Matthew or Luke or John; the New Testament justified his belief that it was better hearing for the sick than was the Old. And Agar, with his little book and his beard growing patriarchal through his forgetfulness, was the most welcome of all visitors to the sick at Aasvogelsfontein. 'For we have been told all this before, and we have thought and hoped it might be true,' said the sick men. 'But as this Englishman tells it there remains no room for doubt. To him it is real and he makes it real for us.'

And all the while Agar lived in an ecstasy. Let us not seek its nature, but only say that not even the predikant slaved harder at his task than Agar Quinn; and the beautiful voice grew ragged and harsh, and quavered and broke, and Mark and Luke and Matthew and John spoke now in a whisper, but their words still attained their end.

And all the while the sickness lay heavy on Aasvogelsfontein, and ere it went it took Agar Quinn. For there was no one to do for him what he had done for others, and so he perished in great pain and sorrow, and his body, which he had forgotten of late, seemed but that of a dirty, miserable old man.

But who shall say that the trumpets did not sound for him upon the other side?

F. NORREYS CONNELL.

SHAKESPEARE.

TWO LECTURES GIVEN AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.

BY H. C. BEECHING, D.LITT.

II.—THE CHARACTER OF THE DRAMATIST.

THE problem to which we are to address ourselves in this lecture is the question whether it is possible from an examination of Shakespeare's writings to arrive at any conclusion as to his personal character and view of life. Let us begin at the bottom with some questions as to his personal tastes and habits. And first, as to drinking. Readers have been struck with one or two passages—one in 'Hamlet,' one in 'Othello,' and one in 'As You Like It'—censuring the English habit of drinking to excess; passages which have no relevancy to the plot of the play, and seem spoken over the footlights directly to the audience.

This heavy-headed revel, east and west,
Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations.

Now the interest of these passages is considerable in themselves, but they become more interesting still in the light of certain local traditions that Shakespeare's convivial habits occasionally led him into intemperance. So that what on the surface looks merely like the voice of Shakespeare's contempt for a silly custom may be interpreted, and by some critics is interpreted, as the voice of the dramatist's self-accusation. Which is it?

Let me say, unhesitatingly, that I have no faith in the traditions. One is connected with a local crab-tree; we know how a tradition of that sort never dies; it passes from generation to generation not only of men but of trees, and is attached in each age to the most prominent memory, being probably in origin as old as Thor. The other tradition is recorded by a vicar of Stratford under the Commonwealth, and is to the effect that Shakespeare died of a fever caught of drinking too much wine at a merrymaking with Ben Jonson and Drayton. But doctors tell us to-day that a fever is more easily contracted from water.

This question of Shakespeare's intemperate habits seems to me a point on which the evidence of his whole successful life may claim to be taken into account. No one can say that his work has suffered from any cheap vice of this sort; and I prefer therefore to hear, in the passages I have referred to, the warnings of a man of common sense trying to stem the tide of a foolish fashion. That exclamation of Portia's when criticising her various suitors :

I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I be married to a sponge,

has to my ear a ring of real disgust; and all the criticisms in that scene we may well take to be roughly Shakespeare's own.

More interesting, perhaps, and less easy of solution, is another question of personal habit. 'Did Shakespeare smoke?' or, as the phrase then was, 'Did he drink tobacco?'

It will be remembered that Shakespeare is one of the very few Elizabethan dramatists who have no reference to that wonderful narcotic which came into England almost at the same moment as his own great genius. The meaning of this silence of his might be argued without end. On the one side, smokers might ask how Shakespeare could possibly introduce tobacco-smoking into romantic or classical drama, the scene of which was laid in mediæval Italy or ancient Rome, or, again, into the Falstaff comedies of Plantagenet days. Or they might urge that if the poet disliked tobacco, it would have been as possible to let the doctor in 'Macbeth' compliment King James on his recent 'Counterblast' to the pernicious drug, as to let him compliment his Majesty on touching for the King's evil. On the other side the anti-tobacconists might point out that Shakespeare had a good chance to introduce smoking as a gentlemanlike accomplishment in the Induction to 'The Taming of the Shrew,' where some fun might have been made of Christopher Sly's attempt to play the gentleman in that particular; but he abstains, and they might add that Shakespeare was probably so sickened of tobacco smoke by the custom of smoking on the stage, that he was little likely to practise it on his own account. The question cannot be determined.

On a higher plane we may ask, had Shakespeare a taste for music? One of the few points on which all the biographers are agreed is that the dramatist was a passionate lover of this art; and they may be right. In an age when music formed part of a liberal education, it is not improbable that he shared in the general appreciation; though his technical knowledge is occasionally at

fault. But if we look at the references to music in the plays, we find that they are so much the outcome of the temperament of the *dramatis personæ*, or of the needs of the dramatic situation, that they must be used with caution as evidence of the dramatist's own taste. The famous speech with which 'Twelfth Night' opens is in character with the love-sick, sentimental Duke; the no less famous speech of Lorenzo in the last act of 'The Merchant of Venice' suits his high-pitched romantic nature, and is moreover in harmony with a scene where

Music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

The piece of evidence that would incline us to give Shakespeare the benefit of any doubt is the 128th Sonnet, addressed to a lady playing on the virginals.

From art let us go to politics. Here we can have little doubt as to Shakespeare's general view. An Elizabethan of genius who had gone through the stress of the Armada year when he was twenty-four years old could not but have felt the new thrill of national life and the new sense of England's greatness, and again and again in his plays Shakespeare says a great word that has still power to stir our blood :

O England, model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart!

or,

This England never did nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror
But when it first did help to wound itself,

or, best of all, John of Gaunt's touching lament in 'Richard II.' But Shakespeare has been accused of supporting the Stuart ideas of monarchy, especially by his references to the sanctity of kingship. An actor attached to the Lord Chamberlain's company, which with James's accession became the King's, was courtier enough to introduce a respectful compliment now and again to his prince; but those who charge Shakespeare with abetting the Stuart notions of divine right must surely forget the lessons on the nature of true kingship which are embalmed in the trilogy of 'Richard II.,' 'Henry IV.,' and 'Henry V.' Again it is objected against Shakespeare that he disliked crowds. But who likes them? Mankind does not show well in crowds, even at political meetings in the twentieth century. And Shakespeare lived before the persons and manners of the commonalty had been polished by school-boards. Certainly Shakespeare made his crowds foolish enough, always at the mercy of

demagogues ; and he made them cruel enough ; but take his mechanicals, not in crowds, but singly, and he is far from denying them human virtues. The Citizens in ' Coriolanus ' have much the best of the argument with Menenius Agrippa, when he is expounding the fable of the belly and its members ; they have much the best of the argument with Coriolanus himself when he is suing for the consulship. And can one say that Shakespeare lacked appreciation of Bottom and Peter Quince and the rest of that admirable dramatic troupe ?

But leaving these particular tastes and opinions, let us ask whether we can gain any light from the plays on Shakespeare's personal character. How may we set about the investigation ? A very brilliant attempt was made in a series of papers contributed seven or eight years ago by Mr. Frank Harris to the ' Saturday Review,' and since collected, to deduce the dramatist's own disposition from a certain predominant type alleged to be found in the plays. Mr. Harris contended that if Shakespeare's many creations were placed side by side, it would be observed that one special type came over and over again, and this type, which the poet found most interesting and has therefore made the most perfect, must, he argues, have been drawn from himself. Just as Rembrandt painted his own portrait at all the critical periods of his life, so, it is alleged, did Shakespeare. He painted it, first, as a youth given over to love's dominion, in Romeo ; a little later, as a melancholy onlooker at life's pageant, in Jaques ; then in middle age, as an ' æsthete-philosopher ' of kindest nature in Hamlet and Macbeth ; after that, as the Duke, incapable of severity, in ' Measure for Measure ' ; and finally, idealised out of all likeness to humanity, in the master-magician Duke Prospero. As a result of an examination of these several portraits Mr. Harris pronounces Shakespeare to have been, in personal disposition, of a contemplative, philosophical nature, of great intellectual fairness and great kindness of heart ; but, on the other hand, incapable of severity and almost of action, of a feminine, sensual temperament, melancholy, soft-fibred, neuropathic. It is a portrait which has been much praised ; and as a *tour de force* it would be difficult to praise it too highly ; but the point of interest to us is not whether it is a clever picture, but whether it is a true likeness. I do not think much subtlety will be required to show that it is not. We must first ask what it is, which all these characters have in common, that makes our critic so sure that they are all portraits of the same person. The answer is that they are all persons given to reflection, to self-

revelation, to pouring out their dissatisfaction with life, and unpacking their heart in words, and moreover all persons who do so in incomparable lyric poetry, so that we are sure the voice must be the authentic voice of Shakespeare.

It will be worth while to look for a moment at one or two of these pictures which are thus presented to us as the portraits of the artist himself. On Romeo we need not stay, he is young and a lover, and Shakespeare had undoubtedly been both; moreover Romeo has imagination, like Shakespeare; but when we have added that he was brave and somewhat impulsive, we have noted all his salient characteristics; for 'Romeo and Juliet' is not in its chief interest a play of character; the tragic element does not come out of the characters of either hero or heroine; they are but the 'most precious among many precious things' which have to be made a sacrifice of, in order that the bloody feud between the Montagues and Capulets may be healed. But when from Romeo we pass to 'the melancholy' Jaques, we may fairly protest against the identification of Shakespeare with him and his view of life. Jaques is a sentimental egotist, and a rhetorical rhapsodiser, who enjoys and parades a philosophic melancholy. We know that Shakespeare did not mean us to admire Jaques's melancholy, because he makes all the healthy-minded people in the play, one after another, laugh at it. And what do the philosophical reflections amount to? There is the satirical speech upon society suggested by the wounded deer, and the Duke tells Jaques frankly that satire is an unhealthy form of employment; and there is the speech, which every child learns, about the seven ages of man, a beautifully written commonplace, but not in Shakespeare's vein. Never does Shakespeare when he speaks in his own person in the Sonnets, and never does he (as I believe), through the lips of the characters with whom he sympathises, pity or despise human life as such; never does he speak of it as merely a stage-play; there are plenty of things in life which disgust and weary him; but he does not say 'All the world's a stage.' Jaques says that. If Shakespeare, as one tradition asserts, himself played the part of Adam, he would enter on Orlando's shoulders after the delivery of this speech, no doubt amid the roar of the theatre which had greeted it, and not, I think, without a smile at such uncritical applause. The next portrait is Hamlet, and in finding in speeches of Hamlet hints of the poet's own view of things, our critic is only following a commonly received and justifiable opinion. But even so, the very fact

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that Hamlet is made the hero of a tragedy implies that the dramatist is viewing his character with not entirely approving eyes. In no tragedy after 'Romeo and Juliet' is the hero merely the victim of circumstances, there is always something in his own character which involves him in catastrophe, and without going into detail it is sufficiently clear that the root of trouble in Hamlet's case is just this brooding melancholy which renders him incapable of action except upon sudden impulse. I would urge, therefore, that if we find Shakespeare holding up one kind of reflective melancholy to ridicule in 'As You Like It,' and showing the fatal consequences of another kind in 'Hamlet,' the most that could be inferred would be that he recognised in himself the tendency to such an infirmity, and perceived its dangers, especially as all that we know of his outward life gives the opposite impression. At this point, then, I shall take leave to consider that the method of discovering Shakespeare's character by identifying him with this and that of his *dramatis personæ* has broken down, without going on to discuss his likeness to Macbeth or the Duke in 'Measure for Measure,' about whom I wish to say a word presently in another connexion, or to Prospero, who has no very clearly defined characteristic but that of benignity.

If we are to reach any results, we must frame our interrogation in a somewhat different form, and ask what light we can get from the plays not directly upon Shakespeare's character, but on his view of life, and his opinions on men and things. And one answer at once suggests itself from what has been already said. We can observe the sentiments put into the mouths of those characters with whom we are plainly meant to sympathise, and contrast them with those that are put into the mouths of other characters with whom we are meant not to sympathise. This is a consideration sufficiently obvious, but it is too often neglected, although it is of the utmost importance to the interpretation of the dramas. There are many little books made to sell for presents which collect what are called the beauties of Shakespeare; but very rarely in such books do we find any discrimination as to the character of the person who makes the speech that is scheduled as a beauty. I have already commented on Jaques's opinion that 'all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.' Take for another example the saying of Hamlet which is sometimes a little thoughtlessly quoted :

There's a divinity doth shape our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Could any one quote this as the opinion of Shakespeare himself who remembered that it is Hamlet who says it, by way of excuse for his own malady of alternate *laissez-faire* and sudden impulse? On the other hand, the sentiments that have passed, and rightly passed, into the spiritual currency of the English people will always be found put into the mouth of characters with whom, in the action, the poet is in sympathy; and if we collect a few of these, such as the passage beginning 'Sweet are the uses of adversity,' or

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out,

or

If our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not,

they suggest to us an outlook upon the world bright, hopeful, and stirring; not that of a dreamy, melancholy, sentimental neuropath; they present a view which is consistent with the picture we obtain from the story of Shakespeare's life, of a man who worked hard in his calling, and of whom his professional comrades could speak with respect and affection: 'I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature.'

But we can get back to something in the dramas more fundamental and more self-revealing than any isolated sentiments. We can observe the way in which Shakespeare viewed his world of men as a whole; what interested him in it; the general idea he had formed of human nature and its possibilities; his opinion of where human success lay and what constituted failure. We can put the question, what sort of place did the world seem to Shakespeare to be? It is quite clear that there was a great deal in the world that filled him with disgust; the Sonnets tell us that:—'Tired of all these, from these would I be gone'; but they tell us also how much there was in the world that he admired and loved; and the more serious plays show us unmistakably that Shakespeare held it to be man's business not to yield to the evil, but to fight it with wisdom and endurance. One point that most strikes us is that Shakespeare looked upon the world as a moral order. Men and women, as Shakespeare saw and drew them, are always creatures exercising freedom of will. In the writings of some other dramatists, the persons of their dramas are sometimes represented as the sport of the higher powers; but in the world that Shakespeare's art mirrors

for us, there is no such thing as a man driven upon evil courses by fate ; the spring of each man's action is seen to lie in his own desires ; he may do or leave undone. He may apparently be helped or hindered by principalities and powers of worlds invisible ; but he cannot be moved by them to action against his will. The ' weird sisters ' who appear to Macbeth cannot bear the blame of his crime, or share it, because they appeared also to his fellow-captain Banquo, who shook off their suggestion ; and Hamlet's ghost, who visits his son, is powerless to touch the springs of his will. And Shakespeare's world is a moral world in the further sense that its men and women are people with consciences ; who recognise the rightness or wrongness of actions, and the law of duty. The only one of Shakespeare's writings which takes a merely sensual view of human nature is the poem of ' Venus and Adonis ' ; which is extraordinarily interesting, from our present point of view, as the first visible effect upon Shakespeare's mind of the Renaissance culture with which he came in contact in London, a culture partly euphuistic, partly classical, and wholly unmoral. The effect unmistakably, for the time, was a complete surrender to the doctrine of what a later age has known as that of ' art for art's sake ' ; which means that any passion of which human nature is capable is suitable for representation, if only it is ' as lively painted as the deed was done ' ; with a preference in practice for the lower nature over the higher. Happily Shakespeare found a valuable corrective to this view of art in his work as a dramatist ; and the second poem he produced, a year after the first, though equally upon a classical theme, was on a less animal plane of interest, and admitted such human conceptions as honour and virtue. And ever after it was this higher nature of men that remained to Shakespeare the point of chief interest. We see this most plainly in the tragedies. The purpose and meaning of Shakespeare's tragic art has been much discussed of late, and it is not a question on which I wish to dogmatise ; but at least this seems true to say, that while it magnifies the dignity and interest of human action by giving it the most painstaking study, it yet aims at showing how the greatest among men might be brought to ruin, if only the circumstances of life were so contrived as to give opportunity and scope to their errors and defects. In his tragedies Shakespeare contrives for his heroes just the circumstances which shall press upon their weak places, and test them to the uttermost. The tragedy of Hamlet, or Brutus, or Macbeth, or Othello, or Antony, if it is not the tragedy of a

noble and a spiritual nature, is nothing at all; there is no reason why the play should have been written. And if we are justified in drawing conclusions as to the character of a man from a survey of his interests, the light that the Shakesperean tragedies throw back upon the character of their writer is singularly bright and clear. Take, for example, the tragedy of Hamlet. A philosophical young prince, of a melancholy habit, finds an obligation laid upon him to avenge his father's murder. In any world, except the particular world that the poet has contrived for him, he might have lived a quiet life among his books; doing little active good perhaps, either speculatively or practically; but certainly doing no harm. But he has a task set him by an authority to which he cannot but own allegiance, that of purging the realm of a monster; and the dramatist has shown us in a crucial instance the tragedy of a brooding intellect divorced from will, of the habit of thinking about duties until we think them away. Or take Brutus in 'Julius Cæsar.' Here again there is question of a student called to action. But the defect of Brutus is not in will, but in practical judgment. In the sacred name of liberty Brutus assassinates the real saviour of society, and lets loose upon his country the horrors of civil war. In moral purpose his stature is heroic; he means the best; and yet so far is this from atoning for his want of insight into men's real dispositions and the needs of the time, that at point after point his moral prestige but renders his want of wisdom the more fatal. Here then are two pictures of great and lovable men, with weaknesses of character such as in everyday life we are perfectly familiar with, and readily excuse; and Shakespeare teaches us that these defects need only their fit occasion and full development, to overwhelm in ruin the nature that owns them and all who are drawn within the circle of their influence. I venture to think, then, that we are justified in drawing a very definite conclusion as to the disposition of the man who penned these two plays. They show us his high esteem for nobility of character—Hamlet and Brutus are men of a high nobility whom we are taught to love—and they show us also his strong sense of the claim the world has upon the highest powers of the men who are born into it.

But from our present point of view, the tragedy of 'Macbeth' is an even better example of Shakespeare's tragic stage, because it directly repudiates an accusation that might perhaps be made against the dramatist, of taking a merely æsthetic view of human life; contemplating it from some lofty tower of his palace of art.

For in *Macbeth* we have a man in whom this æsthetic appreciation of human life is developed to an extraordinary degree. *Macbeth* is a poet. He has a fine and keen and true appreciation of all the situations in which he finds himself, except from the one point of view which under his temptations would have been worth all the rest to him, and which his unimaginative fellow Banquo has, the point of view from which actions are judged as simply right or wrong. As we read the soliloquy in which he debates the suggested murder of Duncan, we notice that the considerations which make him hesitate are, in the main, æsthetic considerations; that it is unbecoming in a man's kinsman, or host, or subject, to kill him; there is no question of any sin in murder. And of every succeeding event in his life he is, from the æsthetic point of view, equally appreciative; just as he enjoys popularity and on that score is almost willing to refrain from murder, so he understands that the old age to which a usurper can look forward cannot be surrounded 'with honour, love, obedience, troops of friends'; and when, just before the last, he learns his wife's death, he speaks with the same just appraisal the epitaph of the life they have lived together since their great sin, the epitaph of the non-moral life, seeing in it a mere succession of days with no goal but death, and therefore no real meaning.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time;
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle,
 Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more; it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.

Could there be a better commentary on the dramatist's own view of life, than this passionate judgment of the futility of the life *Macbeth* had elected to live?

Let us turn for a moment to the comedies, and see if we can glean any light from them upon what Shakespeare liked or disliked in men and women. It seems to me not a little significant that two at least of the defective types of character which he handles in the tragedies, he handles over again in the comedies, only in the comedy he treats them as they are found not in heroic natures, but in ordinary specimens of humanity, and in circumstances

that lead to a much milder form of catastrophe. I have already suggested a comparison between Jaques and Hamlet, each of whom makes the unwarrantable claim to moralise upon life from the outside without taking part in it. In the nobler nature the claim is handled tragically, in the shallower it is rebuked by Rosalind's fine wit. But there is also some sort of a parallel with Marcus Brutus. The self-satisfaction of Malvolio in 'Twelfth Night,' looked at by itself, is very much the same quality as the self-satisfaction of Brutus: the lives of both pass in a dream, neither is in touch with the real world; and—it is a curious point—both are snared to their ruin by the same trick of a forged letter so contrived as to fall in with their dreams. But the interest of the comedies, for our present investigation, lies in this, that they present us not only with criticism, but with a positive ideal; and this Shakespeare gives us in his women. The creator of Portia, and Rosalind, and Beatrice, had, we are convinced, a very clear ideal in his own mind of the sort of life that men and women should pursue, a life of sound sense as opposed to folly, and goodness as opposed to vice. There is one other point I should like to draw attention to in Shakespeare's comedies, because I think it is characteristic of the man; of his justice and tolerance. While he keeps his ideal perfectly clear, and we are never, I believe, for a moment in doubt as to his own judgment upon his characters, he is not afraid of allowing traits of real goodness to persons who on other accounts are exposed to our censure. Take Sir Toby for example. There is no denying that he is a terrible toper, and Shakespeare does not make us in love with his drunkenness; but Shakespeare does let us see that in the drunkard the gentleman is not quite extinct. You will remember that the disguised Viola, being mistaken for her brother Sebastian, is charged by Antonio with denying her benefactor his own purse. This so horrifies Sir Toby that he draws his friends aside, and will have nothing more to do with the youth. 'A very dishonest, paltry boy,' he calls him. It is this perfectly firm but perfectly equitable and all-round judgment on points of character that is so wonderful in the plays, and it is a mere caricature to assert, as some critics have asserted, that Shakespeare was merely easy-going on points of morals.

Indeed, in one famous case, it might be better pleaded that he was too severe a moralist. I imagine every one feels a shock when at the end of 'Henry IV.' he comes upon the new king's sermon to his old boon-companion Falstaff. 'I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers.' It may have been, as has been eloquently maintained,

that Shakespeare had made Prince Hal, from the first, a bit of a prig, and knew he would preach when the chance came. And it may be so. My own feeling rather is that it is Falstaff's misfortune to be born into an historical play instead of a pure comedy. In 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' Falstaff, notwithstanding his enormities—Shakespeare needs all the excuse of a Royal Command for the way he has degraded him—meets no further punishment than the jeers of his would-be victims—it is sufficient in comedy that faults should be judged by laughter. Nobody wants Sir Toby put on the black list as a tippler, or Autolycus sent to gaol for filching linen from the hedges. But when the world of comedy touches the real world, as in 'Henry IV.' and 'Henry V.,' social offences have to meet social punishment, and so we have not only Falstaff exiled from court and dying of a broken heart, but poor Nym and Bardolph hanged for stealing in the wars.

The question of Shakespeare's religion is too large and difficult to be discussed at the end of a lecture, but I should like to say a word about his supposed hatred and abuse of Puritans. This is one of the fixed ideas of the very meritorious life of Shakespeare by Dr. Brandes. 'From "Twelfth Night" onwards,' he says, 'an unremitting war against Puritanism, conceived as hypocrisy, is carried on through "Hamlet," through the revised version of "All's Well that Ends Well," and through "Measure for Measure," in which his wrath rises to a tempestuous pitch' (p. 240). We turn to 'Twelfth Night' and find this: Maria says of Malvolio—'Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan'; to which Sir Andrew replies, 'O, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog.'

Sir Toby. What, for being a Puritan! thy exquisite reason, good knight?

Sir Andrew. I have no exquisite reason for 't, but I have reason good enough.

Maria. The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser.

Now, surely, that passage might have been introduced in defence of Puritans rather than in scorn of them. Sir Andrew takes the tone of courtier-like contempt, and Sir Toby asks him to explain; and he can't. Then Maria retracts the name, and says Malvolio can't be a Puritan because he isn't conscientious. The reference in 'Hamlet' turns out to be Hamlet's saying 'A great man's memory may outlive half his life, but *by'r lady* he must build churches then,' but the oath *by'r lady* is proof enough that no one in the audience would take a reference to the Puritans. In 'All's Well,' that most disagreeable of all Shakespeare's plays, I believe one of the earliest he wrote, which even his revision in the Hamlet period could

not cure, the Clown indeed makes some unsavoury jests, but he blunts their edge by dividing them equally between Papist and Puritan ; and I should say that to find in 'Measure for Measure' an attack on Puritanism is entirely to misconceive that play. The heroine of the play is Isabella, and if Isabella is not a Puritan after Milton's strong type, what is she ? Dr. Brandes does not indeed assert that Shakespeare wrote the play in the interest of Pompey and Mistress Overdone ; but that he wrote it in the interest of King James, who was already coming to blows with Puritanism, and wished to defend his indifference to immorality. When questions are raised as to the general ideas underlying a play, the appeal must be to the general impression it makes on the indifferent spectator ; but apart from that, as conclusive against Dr. Brandes' view, it seems sufficient to point to the scene in the first act where the Duke confesses to Friar Thomas that he had been too remiss, and again to such a speech as this at the end of the play :

My business in this state
Made me a looker-on here in Vienna
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
Till it o'errun the stew.

If Shakespeare had strong opinions about the Hamlets of the world not bestirring themselves to do their duty in it, we may guess that his view extended to reigning princes, though as to them he had to express himself with some reserve.

In one word then, if I am asked how we can get behind Shakespeare's writing to the man himself, I should say, we must ask ourselves what is the impression left on our mind after a careful reading of any play ; because that will be Shakespeare's mind speaking to ours. And I cannot think the general impression we thus gather from the great volume of the poet's work is at all a vague one. We feel that the praise he gives to Brutus is still truer of himself.

His life was gentle ; and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, This was a man !

We are conscious all through the plays of the allied graces of gentleness and manliness. There is in them a clear outlook upon life, both on its good and its evil ; a strong sense that however the evil came about (and there were times when it seemed overwhelming), yet that the good must fight it ; and at the same time there is a gentleness that is prepared to acknowledge good in unexpected places, and is ready to forgive.

CONCERNING BANK RATE.

'WHAT is this tiresome Bank Rate which goes up and down in this stupid way? Why can't it keep quiet? And why does everybody make such a fuss because it moves?'

These questions, fired off in the ear of a weary journalist, who was taking a first mouthful of soup after being steeped to his eyebrows in Bank Rate all day, made him wish that ladies would not take so much intelligent interest in the evening papers before going out to dinner. They also led to a persistent cross-examination, which caused him to miss about five-eighths of a very attractive *menu*; and finally forced him to a resolve, as he went home later on, bodily empty and mentally surfeited with Bank Rate, to try to save some other poor City man from a similar fate, by attempting to explain to a wider audience what Bank Rate really is, why it moves, and why its movements are so momentous that they intrude themselves at dinner, to the detriment of rational conversation.

So treated, the subject is elementary to the denizens of the City, who are invited to pass on to the more satisfying fare provided for them in the other pages of the CORNHILL. This explanation is designed for those who do not know the answers to the questions asked above, and would like to be enlightened. I assume complete ignorance on the subject, and only write for those who acknowledge it.

'Bank' is the Bank of England, and 'Rate' means the price at which it will lend money. Bank Rate is thus the price at which the Bank of England is prepared to lend money. To be strictly accurate, it is the price at which it will discount bills, but this is a technicality into which there is no need to enter, and for the present purpose the above definition is the simplest that can be given.

It lands us in a difficulty at once, simple as it is, for it immediately provokes the retort that there cannot be a price for money, because a price must be money, and it is stupid to talk about giving money for money. This very telling *riposte*, delivered between fish and *entrée*, first made it clear that the enterprise engaged on was of formidable dimensions, and that the fabric of

information had to be built up from bedrock. It was eminently sensible, wholly to the point, and showed, with illuminating effect, how the City talks all day in a language which the more important part of humanity has never learnt to understand.

It is perfectly true that a price must be paid in money, but the consequent conclusion that there cannot be a price for money does not follow. Most of the business of the City of London consists in giving or taking a price for money, and it happens in this wise. John Smith is a trader who sees an opportunity for buying leather cheap in England and selling it at a profit in Argentina. By way of simplifying the example we will suppose that he sees the chance of a profit on the transaction of 50 per cent. But his capital is locked up in other enterprises, and he has not the 10,000*l.* that he wants to carry out the business. He thus requires money immediately, for which he is prepared to pay more money later on; and he is thus ready to give a price, or rate, as it is called, of 5 per cent. for the present use of the 10,000*l.* which will enable him to buy his store of leather which he hopes to sell, in three months' time, for 15,000*l.* Having sold his leather, he will repay the loan of 10,000*l.*, adding to it the interest, or rate, which will amount at 5 per cent. per annum for three months to 125*l.*; when he has allowed for all the other expenses connected with the bargain, such as sending the leather to Buenos Ayres, insurance on it while at sea, commission to his agent in Argentina, the due proportion of his own office expenses at home, and so on, he will find that he has pocketed a handsome profit. And he will have been enabled to do so by the existence of the money market, which provided him with a banker prepared to lend him immediate money, at the moment when he wanted it, in consideration of receiving it back with the addition of the rate charged for its use, when the date settled at the time of the loan arrives.

John Smith's case is only one example among millions. Besides all the traders who want to buy goods cheap in one place and sell them at a higher price in another, there are contractors who want to build railways, dams, bridges, canals, sea-walls, water-works, and all the other devices by which the forces of nature are tamed and made subservient to the uses of mankind; manufacturers who spend their time in buying steel or raw wool and making them into ships or cloth, or in the thousands of other processes by which raw material is worked up into a finished product ready for sale; enterprising adventurers who require the

sinews of war for a prospecting expedition into some far-off waste or wilderness, with a view to developing its mineral or agricultural resources, and making fortunes out of its mines or harvests; financiers who see the chance of a big loan operation and require assistance for the preliminary expenses; and so we could proceed through an interminable list until we came at last to the mere speculator who thinks he will be able to sell a stock, if he had the wherewithal to buy a block of it now at 85, in a few days' time at 90.

In the case of all these traders, manufacturers, adventurers, and speculators, it is part of the essence of their daily enterprise that for something that they propose to buy, or make, or do at the present moment they will be able to get a price, which tempts them to undertake the work; in all cases the price is only to be got at some time later on, when the work shall have been completed; and in all cases the necessary work or purchase requires immediate expenditure, and so implies the probable necessity for borrowing money at once and paying a price, or rate, for its use—that is to say, paying it back with a little more besides when the enterprise has been concluded.

We thus begin to see the enormous importance of the money market in all business transactions, a great part of which are carried out with the help of borrowed money. As the ex-butterman used to say in 'Our Boys,' money does more than make the mare go, it 'sets the whole stable a-gallopin'.' And if we look a little closer we shall see that the rate or price paid for the use of money will often be so important a consideration that its cheapness or otherwise will turn the scale in favour of, or against, the enterprise being carried out.

In the case of John Smith and his leather enterprise, cited above, we supposed him to see the chance of a profit of 50 per cent. on his bargain; but it is obvious that such big prizes as this do not often arise in trade, and that brisk competition very quickly cuts the profit finer; there would shortly be a dozen other Richmonds in the field prepared to sell leather in Argentina for rather less than the original importer, and we can easily suppose a case in which profits had been brought down to such a point that only a margin of 5 per cent. was left. That is, our friend John, instead of being able to rely on selling his 10,000*l.* worth of leather for 15,000*l.*, as in the happier days when he concluded the original bargain, would only see a prospect of selling it for 10,500*l.* The quickness of the transaction

might still enable him to make a profit on these terms, for it will be remembered that it only took him three months to buy his goods, ship them, and sell them, and have the proceeds remitted. He would thus still be in a position to earn 5 per cent. on his enterprise in three months, while the rate that he pays for his money is calculated *per annum*, by the year.

This is a distinction that occasionally confuses those who are not used to the jargon of the City. At first sight it would appear that Smith, if he pays 5 per cent. for his money and makes a profit of 5 per cent. on the bargain, is just where he was; but this is not so, because of the time question with which we are now concerned. A profit of 5 per cent. that can be got home in three months, or a quarter of a year, is clearly a profit at the rate of four times as much, or 20 per cent., when we reckon it *per annum*. John Smith is going to turn 10,000*l.* into 10,500*l.* in three months, and, as we saw before, he will pay 125*l.* for the use of the money at 5 per cent. *per annum*. But even so, he has only a margin of 475*l.*, and by the time that he has paid for freight and insurance, commissions and all the minor expenses, the profit will have been cut so fine that he will probably think twice before entering on the risk of the enterprise, and engaging his credit and setting all his machinery to work, and then perhaps finding that his market has moved against him, and that by the time his leather has reached its destination he cannot get more than 9,500*l.* for it.

Thus baldly stated, all this is very platitudinous and obvious and tiresome, and of course every reader knew it all before. Nevertheless it had to be set down, because though everybody knows it quite well when he or she sees it before them, it is often forgotten or not allowed for in considering problems which it explains. I am laying the foundation on which Bank Rate is finally to be erected, and must appeal for patience in the language of the notice that used to be put up in music saloons in the Far West—'Please do not shoot the performer, He is doing his Best.'

We have arrived at the fact that borrowed money is an important element in an enormous number of transactions in all kinds of business enterprise, so important that the rate or price to be paid for its use will often determine whether a transaction is to be carried out. And we know that Bank Rate is the rate at which the Bank of England is prepared to lend money. And so we begin to see the importance of Bank Rate, especially when we add to these ingredients the further fact that Bank Rate indirectly rules the rates

at which all the other banks and moneylenders in the United Kingdom will lend money, and has a considerable effect on the rates asked by moneylenders in other countries. And now we are beginning to see why everybody 'makes such a fuss' when Bank Rate goes up or down.

The Bank of England, as is well known to everyone who has read Macaulay's History, was founded to give financial assistance to the Government of William III., and was given a monopoly, as far as joint-stock companies were concerned, of banking business, which then consisted chiefly of issuing notes. Private firms had already developed businesses and could not be made to suppress themselves; but no other company consisting of more than six members was allowed to start as banker. In 1833 the Bank's monopoly was restricted to a radius of 65 miles round London, and at the same time it was discovered that even the monopoly that it possessed had already been upset by the development of banking business, which had by this time begun to be more and more a matter of taking money from depositors and lending it to borrowers, and less a question of issuing notes. This development had not been allowed for by the terms of the Bank's charter, which only retained for it the exclusive right of issuing notes. Consequently the Bank's privilege, which was still meant to give it a monopoly of joint-stock banking in London, had been broken down by an unnoticed development of business; and when the founders of the London and Westminster and Joint Stock Banks decided to form joint-stock companies to take deposits and carry out all the other details of banking business, it was found that as long as they refrained from issuing notes they could not be prevented from establishing themselves in the heart of the Bank of England's privileged territory. It is a curious and interesting example of the manner in which laws are drawn in England with results quite contrary to the intention of their introducers.

The example of the pioneer joint-stock banks was quickly followed, but, by another curious development, the formation of all these new rivals, instead of degrading the Bank of England to the position of a mere one among many, established it more firmly than ever, as the bell-wether of a numerous and fleecy flock. For the new banks found it convenient to bank with the Bank of England, and deposit with it their necessary reserves of cash, apart from the small amounts that they kept ready in their tills to supply the demands of their customers. If you look at the balance-sheet

which your bank tucks into the pocket of your passbook every half-year, you will see that among its assets it includes an item of 'cash in hand and at the Bank of England.' Thus established as the bankers' bank and acquiring a host of new and rich customers, who collected deposits for it all over the kingdom, the Bank of England was greatly strengthened in its position, and was enabled to fulfil much more easily and cheaply its primary duties as banker to the Government and leader of the London money market.

This explanation was necessary, to show how it came about that Bank Rate indirectly rules the rates at which all other banks and moneylenders are prepared to lend. There is no obligation on other banks, when the Bank Rate is raised, to follow it by charging more to their customers for accommodation, but when the most important moneylender leads the way, it is natural that others should follow, especially when it is a question of charging more for an article of general use; and it is now established as a matter of convention and custom that when Bank Rate goes up, the rate that the other banks allow to their depositors—or pay to those who lend them money—is also raised, and it follows from this that they have to recoup themselves by charging more to those who borrow money from them.

As to the effect of a movement in Bank Rate on the price of money all over the world, this will be better appreciated when we arrive, later on, at the fact that London is not only the most important money market in the world, but the only money market, in the real sense of the phrase, to which borrowers can apply.

If we can now claim to have won our way to a point at which the importance of a movement in Bank Rate has been made more or less clear, it must be admitted that the question why it should move at all has not been dealt with. 'Why can't the tiresome thing keep quiet,' and why should not money always be available at a fixed price, without any of these fluctuations in its value which startle the nerves of the City and cover the contents bills of the evening papers with terrifying legends in huge letters?

Bank Rate goes up and down because the price of money—of which Bank Rate is the most important expression—fluctuates. And the price of money fluctuates because it is regulated, like the price of everything else, by variations in the supply and demand. I apologise for the use of this horrid old phrase, with its reminiscences of the Manchester School and the study of political economy, but

one cannot get away from the fact that if a thing is plentiful and not much wanted it will be cheap, and if it is scarce and wanted eagerly it will be dear. This only throws us back on the necessity for discovering why money should be more plentiful at one time than at another, and also why the demand for it should vary. And perhaps it will be worth while first of all to find out what money really is.

Many things have been money at various stages of the world's history. In very early days cattle appear to have been the chief medium of exchange and standard of value, and we find in Homer that expensive treasures were assessed as worth so many beeves, while a bride is mentioned as bringing a dowry of 100 oxen. In this connection somebody once perpetrated a joke about 'current kine of the realm,' but perhaps it would be kinder to forget it. Tobacco, bullets, hides, and many other commodities have fulfilled the functions of a currency in primitive or frontier communities, the chief essential required from this kind of money being its ready acceptability in the place where it is used. Other essentials which the more fastidious demands of growing civilisation have required are portability, durability, and, as far as possible, steadiness in value. These essentials have been found best in the precious metals, gold and silver, which were the money of the Middle Ages, and still are important items in the fluid and elusive compound which is the money of to-day.

In the richest and most civilised countries gold has gradually ousted silver, and as a medium of exchange has been itself, to a great extent, ousted by paper, though it still remains the basis on which the paper is ostensibly founded. The circulation of bank notes, payable on demand in gold, was the first step towards this general use of paper money, and now in the United Kingdom—the country in which banking facilities have been brought to their highest perfection—bank notes have themselves been largely superseded by the safer and more convenient cheque, the most perfect form of credit instrument that has yet been devised.

In England the use of paper money has been developed to such a high point that it has been calculated that nearly 99 per cent. of our monetary transactions are carried through without the use of coin; but it must be remembered that gold, coined or in the form of bullion, is always at the back of the paper. Every bank note is a promise to pay gold to the bearer on demand; every cheque gives the holder a right to demand notes or gold. Consequently, though

our development of the use of paper money has economised the use of gold to an extraordinary extent, every piece of paper is still a certificate representing a right to so much gold, and as we shall see later, it is only in England that this is so, not only in theory but in practice.

The consequence of this important fact is that the supply of money depends to a certain definite extent on the supply of gold. There is, of course, never enough gold in the country to cash all the pieces of paper that are flying about in payment for all kinds of transactions; this is not necessary, because most of the pieces of paper are mere book entries between banks, and are crossed off against one another without intervention of coin, so that a store of gold is only wanted for the few cases in which coin is used, and to act as a reserve in the case of emergency. But it is admitted as an axiom of sound banking that a certain amount of actual gold must be held in the country—the chief store being kept in the vaults of the Bank of England—to protect the mercantile community against the awkward consequences that would ensue if anything like a scramble for the metal took place.

Thus it comes about that most monetary transactions are now carried out by the exchange of pieces of paper, but the supply of money depends, indefinitely and to a certain extent, on the supply of gold.

That the demand for money should fluctuate is also obviously reasonable. At first sight it would seem that everybody always wants as much money as he can get, and in this sense it may be said that the demand for money is invariable, inexhaustible, and incalculable. But the demand for money, in the sense in which the phrase is used in mercantile circles, means a demand for loans on the part of folk who have the necessary security to offer and credit to pledge; and they naturally expand their demands when they see a chance of using money profitably in any kind of enterprise or speculation. Consequently the demand increases when trade is active and a general spirit of buoyant enterprise is abroad in mercantile circles. There is also a regular tidal movement in the demand for money, when crops are harvested either at home or abroad. This makes itself felt keenly, for in the far-off country districts where banking is little developed, crop movements require actual currency to finance them, and consequently we find that in the autumn season there is, under normal circumstances, a regular demand for gold in the great agricultural countries such as the

United States, Egypt, and Argentina. Hence it is that in the autumn we commonly hear of 'tight money' in the City.

We have thus arrived at the following conclusions: That the Bank Rate, or price at which the Bank of England will lend money, rules the rates charged by other moneylenders in England, and affects those current elsewhere; that money is wanted when trade and speculation are active and when crops are being harvested; and that the supply of money depends to a certain extent on the amount of gold which is held in the vaults of the Bank of England.

A demand for money in the United Kingdom is naturally met by drafts on this store kept by the Bank of England. We have seen that it is the bankers' bank, and consequently has to meet any requirements that fall on the other banks. But it also is true that a demand for money in the great producing countries abroad also falls to a greater or less extent on the Bank of England. This happens partly because England is the only country which has sufficient commercial courage and self-reliance to buy the goods that all other lands produce, without imposing artificial restraints on their importation, and so is the great mart to which all surplus produce tends to be sent. The magnitude of her purchases, especially when crops and raw material are coming to market, gives the sellers the right to demand gold, and gold is practically an English product owing to the large number of gold mines in other countries owned by English shareholders. But another very important reason why a demand for gold elsewhere is likely to fall on London lies in the fact that of the great financial centres London is the only one in which the obligation to pay gold, immediately and on demand, is recognised as an essential part of the banking system. Anyone who receives a cheque in England can get gold for it or Bank of England notes; and he can then take the Bank of England notes to the Bank and change them, there and then, into sovereigns. No other centre gives this facility. If it does not suit the Bank of France to part with gold, a holder of its notes is liable to be paid in silver five-franc pieces, mere tokens, intrinsically worth about half their face value. In Germany the obligation to pay gold exists in theory, but in practice the Reichsbank makes matters so unpleasant to those who ask it for gold when it does not want to part with it that even 'Captain von Köpenick' would hesitate about raiding its store. In New York it is generally easy to obtain gold; a holder of a draft on a New York bank asks to have it paid in gold certificates, one of the many forms of American paper currency,

and exchanges the certificates into gold at the Treasury. But the possession of a credit in New York does not give an absolute right to a gold certificate, and it is quite conceivable that the supply of them might be made difficult. It follows from this great advantage—the importance of which it is difficult for those not actually engaged in business to measure—possessed by London as a monetary centre, that London is the world's banker, and that commercial transactions all over the world are settled by a draft on London, the only place where the possession of a draft gives the immediate and unquestioned right to its equivalent in gold. And here we see a very important reason why active trade elsewhere is likely to affect, sooner or later, the Bank's store of gold.

And if any accident happens anywhere, if one of those moments arrives when

the teeming earth
is with a kind of colic pinch'd and vexed,

and a San Francisco earthquake results, we find that British insurance companies, with their enormous world-wide business, have to make good nearly half the realised losses, and here again is another pull on London's gold store.

So that when we have active trade all over the world, with great expansion and development going on in more backward countries, and at the same time there is great speculative activity among the dare-devil operators of the New York Stock Exchange, and then the autumn season arrives with harvests to be financed and paid for, and at the same time San Francisco claims are coming forward for settlement, and fears of Socialistic legislation at home are making investors put money into foreign securities and so increasing the pull that foreign countries have on our gold store, it is not surprising to find that the gold in the Bank's vaults has been reduced to a point at which the directors are obliged to take energetic measures for its protection.

And this they do by raising the rate or price at which they will lend money, and so influencing all the other moneylenders in London to do the same. And the result of this measure is that money in London is worth a higher price, and foreign traders and financiers are encouraged not to withdraw money from London but to leave it there, and to send more money to London, to earn the high rates that it commands. And so, though London cannot get much gold out of other foreign centres, because of the difficulties

that they place, as we have seen, in the way of its export, a high Bank Rate checks its withdrawal and enables us to keep the proceeds of our gold mines as they come in from South Africa and elsewhere.

As originally given, the above explanation of Bank Rate and its movements was summed up by the comment that 'it all seems very stupid.' I agreed readily, and, hoping that feminine intuition might flash out a new and ideal currency system, free from barbaric dependence on the supply of a metal, pressed for a suggestion of improvement. But our hostess gave the signal and the opportunity was lost.

HARTLEY WITHERS.

MRS. PALLISER'S PEARLS.

DARENT looked at them.

'At Simla—appropriate,' he allowed. 'On a Jhelum house-boat—just possible. Here—frankly ridiculous.'

Mrs. Palliser fingered her necklace pensively.

'Now, why?' she argued. 'What becomes or does not become me cannot be a mere matter of latitude.'

'Environment,' corrected Darent. 'At Simla we simply Orientalise Park Lane.'

'And what is Srinagar but the most Eastern of Henleys?'

'Does one attend Henley in ropes of pearls?' said the soldier. 'If one did it would have no bearing on the theme. We are not at Srinagar—we are not even in Cashmere. We are up in Baltistan now—or I thought we were till you appeared to-night, like a Queen of Sheba.'

Mrs. Palliser put her head on one side.

'She was a most fascinating woman,' she submitted.

Darent sniffed.

'That old scandal about Solomon? There was never a tittle of evidence.'

Under cover of the night his companion smiled enigmatically. For a moment she was silent, letting her gaze wander over the white tents, the crimson of the cook-fires, the sombre background of the deodars. It rested at last upon the face of the man beside her, duskiely crimson in the glow of his cheroot.

'Jiwun Dass, the curio dealer at Srinagar, offered me five hundred rupees for them,' she said irrelevantly. 'I daresay they are worth as many pounds. Am I to throw them away?'

Darent looked round with a little start.

'Throw away what?' he demanded.

'My pearls,' she said patiently. 'I'm afraid I bore you—your inattentions are most marked.'

'You're so breathlessly impulsive,' he apologised. 'Throw them away! Heavens, no! But pack them in the lowest corner of one of your kilters—yes. Believe me, you'll feel a glow of appropriateness.'

'Dowdiness,' she amended. 'All you men worship it. You think it implies domesticity.'

'Not at all,' he denied; 'but we like things to be in keeping. Now look at Mrs. Bankart.'

The suggestion was metaphorical. A white gleam thirty yards away indicated the position of Mr. Bankart's shirt front. Experience suggested the adoring proximity of his wife. But only the eye of imagination could pierce the veil of darkness and picture the serenities which lay beyond.

Mrs. Palliser tittered softly.

'She's a darling. But—do you look at her much?'

'Her husband does,' said Darent severely.

'It's his duty.'

'And his pleasure.'

'The dear old thing!' commented Mrs. Palliser as she stood up. She sighed as she held out her hand.

'Good-night,' she said. 'To-morrow shall be a day of reformation. I'll appear in a short skirt and nailed boots. If you're good I might even come and stand with you—for one beat.'

He shook his head.

'There now!' he deplored. 'That remark shows that you are merely with us, and not of us. Nailed boots! Don't you know that rubber soles are the only wear to grip the pine needles? And there is no beat to-morrow—Bankart wants a day off.'

She raised her eyes devoutly.

'Thank Heaven!' she aspired. 'For once I shall not be disturbed at 4 A.M. by the shouts of a hundred super-excited men. And you? Shall you spend the day—looking at Mrs. Bankart?'

Darent's expression became suddenly but distinctly apologetic.

'No,' he said diffidently. 'The fact is news has come in of *tahr*—wild goat—on the tops. I shall be after them at dawn.'

Mrs. Palliser inspected him thoughtfully.

'That will be awfully jolly—for you,' she said.

Darent made a restless movement.

'They are here to-day and gone to-morrow—*tahr*,' he explained. 'If one does not follow them up at once——' He left off with a shrug.

'So wise of them,' approved Mrs. Palliser. 'Good-night again.'

'Good-night,' said Darent, and said it with an air of guilt. He emphasised it, indeed, by standing in a deferential attitude till

Mrs. Palliser had disappeared. But as he sat down there was a faintly resentful feeling at the back of his mind. He felt as if a summary conviction had been recorded against him without a word from the defence.

In her tent Mrs. Palliser was indulging in a mental soliloquy.

'If you don't follow them up at once,' she reminded herself. 'Shikar—always shikar! At Simla—tame as a cat. On the Jhelum—hanging on my lightest word. But up here! If there's so much as a whisper of bear or ibex—whoof!' She snapped her fingers in her ayah's unemotional face.

Twelve hours later Darent, three thousand feet above the camp, was searching the landscape with his binoculars. Behind him, Sitka, his Balti tracker, was similarly engaged with a telescope. A few feet away a new-built cairn showed where a *tahr* had been buried to await the evening's transport to camp. It had been a clean shot through the shoulder at a hundred and fifty yards, and Darent still glowed as he thought of it. Masculinely irrational, he ranked a result for his expedition as an excuse—a poignant example of soldierly simple-mindedness.

Fifteen hundred feet below the nullahs widened out into a series of shallow valleys. They grooved the low ground in the shape of a fan, jewelled here and there with tiny rivulets, velvet with deodar and pine. But the watchers' scrutiny was all for the wilderness of upper crags, where the coveted ibex feed.

So it was more by accident than design that Sitka swept his glass across the expanse of vale below, brought it to a sudden halt, stared, and finally gave a satisfied little grunt.

'*Hurput*—bear!' he said tersely, twitching his master's coat. Darent stared down the drop and said something monosyllabic.

'Five hundred yards!' he estimated dejectedly, 'and among all those trees! No good—from here.'

Sitka pointed to the right.

'We descend by the far side of the slope?' he suggested.

Darent was still staring.

'There are two of them,' he announced suddenly. 'In different nullahs, with a ridge between.'

Sitka poised his glass. A moment later he smiled—grimly.

'A man, sahib, a man! Seeking honey, as *hurput* also seeks it. If he has found it and they meet we shall see sport. For honey *hurput* will dare all.'

Suddenly the bear could be seen to halt. He lifted his nose and

scrambled up the intervening ridge. He stood upon the crest of it, swaying, and staring fiercely into the dip below.

In the same instant the man raised his eyes and caught sight of him. A yell rang up through fifteen hundred feet of space. Sitka shook, watching the comedy with an expression which gave no hint that tragedy might supervene. But Darent frowned.

'The brute will kill him!' he muttered, feeling vaguely for his rifle. The tracker made a gesture of dissent.

'Nay; unless he be a fool he will drop his basket and *hurput* will dine, caring not a pice for the man if he have the honey. See! Already he flees!'

'But with the basket,' retorted Darent. 'The brute's after him!' The two brown bodies twinkled between the trees, but it was soon obvious that the beast, in spite of his ungainly trot, was gaining. Another yell echoed among the crags. Darent cuddled the butt up to his shoulder.

'Have a care, sahib, have a care!' remonstrated the Balti. 'Among all those trees a bullet may go strangely astray.'

The Englishman hesitated. The bear was at the very heels of the man when Sitka gave a sudden exclamation of relief.

'The son of many generations of foolishness has dropped the basket!' he cried. 'Why in Allah's name did he tempt fate so long?'

Darent put the rifle down and seized the glasses. The basket had been relinquished under very strong compulsion. Lunging out, the bear had torn away the wallet which hung from the fugitive's shoulder.

Yet even now the man did not continue his flight to any distance. A few yards away he halted, gesticulating and yelling passionately. The victor paid little attention to this demonstration from the vanquished. He was busy with the spoils of war.

He tore the wallet apart and took a gulp at its contents.

The next instant he had risen erect, his forepaws beating frantically as if he fought for air. They could even distinguish the great throat muscles as they rippled beneath the tautening skin; they could see, though they could not hear, his choking coughs.

He fell over, bursting the basket as he rolled upon it. A syrupy stream wandered forth, and the great brute kicked and writhed in the middle of it till his coat was thick with dust and honey and the

powdered contents of the wallet. He wound himself into knots—he was convulsed.

Sitka was also convulsed—with merriment.

‘Behold! he chokes—the glutton!’ he cried. ‘The man will make no bad bargain—a pot of honey for the skin of a bear.’

Evidently the unknown shared this opinion. He drew further out of the undergrowth and approached his enemy, watching him warily.

A stupendous spasm shook the brute—some tension within seemed to be loosed. He sat up, rocking to and fro, but breathing less pantingly. As he swallowed great mouthfuls of air his little pig’s-eyes roved and discovered the watcher.

He reared menacingly and lumbered forward.

The man’s arms described a wild parabola, indicative of unplumbed depths of despair, and vanished with their owner into the shadows of the nearest glade. *Hurput* sat down with an ingenuous air of relief. The savour of the honey rose to his nostrils. He made clumsy and unsuccessful efforts to reach with his tongue the centre of his own broad back. He whirled, he turned somersaults. Repulsed in every endeavour, he turned sullenly to the few remaining splashes which had escaped adhering to his hide, lapped them, and continued his investigations of the basket. That this was empty was proved by his wheeling at last to depart as he came.

And then? They could almost see the sigh which escaped him. For another man had advanced into the range of his vision—a man who dropped into the picture as if from the very skies. He and the bear confronted each other through a moment of prolonged suspense.

Wearily *Hurput* shrugged his shoulders, or it looked like it. It was, at any rate, with a despondent motion which seemed to acquiesce in the inevitableness of these encounters that he rolled forward. There was something, too, which was almost perfunctory about his roar.

But from this antagonist there were no unreasonable procrastinations. A whisk of white shone among the trunks, flashed, and was gone, swallowed by the shadows as the cloud swallows the lightning. *Hurput*, deprived of the stimulating vision, halted, wondered, and turned once more to the fastness which had first surrendered him. Shamblingly he retreated, a piebald disgrace in the eyes of all forest folk, to gain the head of the ravine.

To this same point Darent and Sitka were already directing their

steps. Ten minutes later *Hurput's* third and last interview with the human enemy took place.

As he rolled up the aisle of pines a hated odour reached his nostrils and lifted him menacingly upon his hind feet. Not ten yards away Darent had stepped out from behind a trunk, his rifle at his shoulder. The bear snarled and charged.

There was a thin spurt of flame, a clanging echo among the rocks, and the great body sprawled down in a heap. Twice the great limbs spurned the dust, and then were still—finally. Three, for *Hurput*, had been the unlucky number.

'What a spectacle!' said Darent, eyeing the body with great dissatisfaction. 'I question if the skin's worth taking.'

The thick hair was absolutely clotted. As Sitka examined it he shook his head doubtfully. From the shoulders to the loins the hide was an inch deep in a conglomeration of honey, dust, and *crumbs*.

'*Chupatties*!' exclaimed the tracker. The hunter of honey had brought cakes and syrup for his provision.

Darent nodded as he still stared at the carcase.

'We'll take it,' he announced at last. 'Ghee—oil—something may loosen it. We'll see later.'

Sitka gave one of his taciturn little nods.

'As the Presence wills,' he assented, and began to sharpen his knife upon a stone. Half an hour later he rolled the smoking pelt into a bundle, dropped it across his shoulder and set off at his master's heels in the direction of the distant camp.

The dusk was falling as they stepped out into a clearing and caught a glimpse of the white tents gleaming through the criss-cross of the pines far below. The reek of cook-fires rose through the stillness. Darent's pace quickened; he wheeled round the angle of a fallen tree and strode—almost into the arms of Mrs. Palliser.

She showed no surprise. He recognised in a moment that she had been waiting for him. But he noted, too, that there was something strained in her aspect—a sense of emotion repressed.

'You?' he cried. 'Alone—a thousand feet above the camp? The reformation has indeed begun!'

She did not respond to his raillery. She smiled, but with her lips, not with her eyes.

'Good sport, I hope?' she said quietly, and began to stroll beside him.

'Excellent!' he said, 'but——' He came to a sudden halt and stared at her.

She raised her eyebrows.

'Yes?' she hazarded. 'Yes?'

He made an expressive gesture.

'Something is the matter,' he protested. 'You have been—grieving?'

This time she smiled—appreciatively.

'How tactfully put! Grieving! Why not bluntly—crying? Isn't it a woman's privilege?'

Impulsively he put his hand upon her arm.

'You *have* been crying?' he asked.

She nodded, flushing faintly.

'Yes,' she said, 'but not, I hope, without reason. All my jewellery has been stolen!'

He halted with a gasp.

'Your—your necklace?' he cried incredulously. 'Not that?'

'Every pearl in it,' she answered. 'You may triumph—you have every right to—but——'

'But——?'

'But I hope you won't,' she said suddenly, looking up at him. 'I'm—I'm a little unstrung.'

Both Darent's arms rose impulsively towards her, and then, as their owner remembered the tracker plodding stolidly behind, fell back. But his voice deepened into sudden tenderness.

'You really thought that I——?'

'Not you—not you!' she interrupted penitently. 'But the Bankarts won't give me any sympathy—they're enraged. They say I have spoilt the whole expedition—that I had no business to put such temptation in people's way——'

'Then there is a clue?' he said eagerly. 'You suspect——?'

'Jan Singh—the cook!' she said, and shrugged her shoulders hopelessly.

Darent whistled loud and long.

'Jan Singh!' he repeated. 'My goodness! Bankart wouldn't hear a word against him—he's the apple of his epicurean eye! But, in the name of all that's reasonable, why do you suspect him—why?'

'Because it *was* him!' she cried petulantly. 'Because I've seen him look at them—because all my instincts tell me it was him. And Mr. Bankart won't even speak to him.'

'But if there is absolutely no evidence,' he temporised, 'even I don't see——'

'He was away from the camp for five hours—alone.'

'Oh! he was, was he? That's suspicious. Did he give any excuse?'

'He was collecting cones—for the grill fires. So he says.'

He laughed.

'A trifle thin—as an excuse. He could collect tons in as many minutes. But still——' He shook his head doubtfully.

From behind the Balti gave a sudden little dry cough. It was a signal that he desired leave to address his master. Darent turned and looked at him.

'The Presence had occasion to speak of that pig-faced son of dirt, Jan Singh?'

Darent nodded.

'So my ears informed me,' said the tracker apologetically. 'Is any act of his in question?'

Darent hesitated.

'Merely that he had five hours of idleness to account for and did so clumsily.'

Sitka smiled.

'Surely the getting of wild honey is no vain pretext?' he submitted.

Darent's eyes grew wide.

'What tale is this?' he cried. 'The man who ran--whom the bear pursued? Was that the cook?'

'No other, sahib,' said Sitka quietly. 'At the time the fellow had some tinge of familiarity about him, but at the distance vaguely. I knew him—and knew him not. Hearing his name tossed between the memsahib and yourself I took thought. He limped—that one, and now I can place the limp with its owner.'

Darent turned again. Mrs. Palliser watched him anxiously.

'Sitka knows—suspects something?' she asked.

Darent shook his head.

'So far he has heard no more than the mention of his name. But—but there are possibilities of—of queerness about the matter. When did the jewels disappear?'

'How can I tell? They were in a case, packed in a kilter, and this was under my charpoy. The side of the tent was cut, so evidently the kilter was drawn out, rifled, and replaced. The watchman, of course, saw nothing.'

'And Jan Singh was seen to leave the camp?'

'At dawn,' said Mrs. Palliser.

For another minute Darent meditated silently. Then his eyes twinkled.

'All the same the fact remains that you should *not* have introduced valuable jewels into a peaceful shikarri camp,' he said gravely.

The twinkle escaped Mrs. Palliser; the gravity of his voice did not. Suddenly and unashamedly she began to cry.

Darent turned and made a significant gesture. Sitka disappeared among the pine trunks.

'All the same I'm not altogether sorry that you did,' said Darent; and this time his voice held an altered significance which made Mrs. Palliser look up.

'Why?' she whimpered, and then suddenly read his eyes. She made a little startled movement away from him.

'Because,' he said, insinuating an arm about her waist, 'in this matter you are going to rely upon me, and perhaps in future I may persuade you to make a practice of doing so. What?'

She whisked her handkerchief across her eyes. She allowed her smile to break out into radiance.

'I—I don't mind giving you a trial,' she admitted, and from that moment the deodars shadowed Elysium.

But the accommodation—in Elysium—is strictly limited. The truth of this was borne in upon the lovers as within a hundred yards of the camp they encountered Bankart.

He received their announcement—he responded, indeed, with formal congratulations—but he did it with a sort of resentful surprise. He stared at Darent as a crusted Tory might stare at a colleague who had transferred himself and his principles to the Radical benches. Once, in fact, Darent caught him sorrowfully shaking his head.

The nature and cause of this position were not made plain till some hours later, when the ladies had retired. Then the flood-gates were opened.

The imputation upon the immaculate Jan Singh was the text of a sermon which Bankart preached without notes, without eloquence, but with an earnestness which should have bred instant conviction. This, at any rate, was his own point of view. As he endeavoured to impress it upon his audience the conversational temperature rose many degrees. Argument clashed against argument; neither listened, since both desired to speak; personal points of view were introduced; extremely personal comments were made. In short,

within ten minutes the friends of years discovered themselves involved in a most pregnant quarrel. They separated, fuming, and Darent, who had opened the discussion with a mind receptive of proofs of the cook's innocence, went to bed absolutely convinced of his guilt.

'I'll summarise your argument,' he sneered, as he stood in his tent door. 'Jan Singh can cook, and therefore he can't steal. Skittles!' He let the canvas curtain drop, and chuckled fiercely as the tide of Bankart's wrath rumbled away, to wash in intermittent mutterings around the bedside of his wife. 'Pig-headed old glutton!' soliloquised Darent as he laid his head upon the pillow.

It seemed to him that it had rested there but five minutes, though as a matter of fact it was as many hours, when he was awake and sitting up. A voice was whispering in his ear.

'Can the Presence rise and come with me—omitting the lighting of a lamp?'

The voice was the tracker's.

'How?' asked his master, still imperfectly awake. 'What is toward?'

'Matters of moment, sahib,' said Sitka quietly, 'of which you shall judge. Let your clothing match the night.'

Darent thrust his feet into felt boots, drew a thick grey dressing-gown over his pyjamas, and followed the Balti, who moved like a shadow into the forest.

Through ten very dark and silent minutes the Englishman heard nothing save the hoot of an owl or the far, faint wail of jackals. He was brought to a halt by the pressure of the tracker's fingers upon his arm.

He waited, vividly conscious of the beatings of his own heart but straining vainly after any other sound.

Then, querulous and scarcely audible, a muttering reached his ears. Out of the nullah bed, not ten feet below him, it rose—the low, crooning monotone in which a native will often while away hours of waiting through the night. Significantly Sitka pressed his arm again.

Through a quarter of an hour Darent sat motionless. Pins and needles began to riot in his limbs—cramp threatened—overpowering impulses to break the stillness gripped him. Suddenly a new sound—from the far side of the nullah—brought the relief of a new interest.

! The crooning stopped. Jan Singh's voice cut the silence with a whisper.

'Is it you, oh Jiwn Dass ?'

There was no answer in words. A faint crashing of jungle grass told where a heavy body slid down the bank. The cook's voice rose again—in muffled supplications.

'*Marf karo*, have mercy !' he wailed. 'Indeed and indeed it was no fault of mine. I brought you all that you desired.'

'Son of a pig, child of generations of dishonour,' snarled the other, 'you poured dirt upon me, you mocked me with the falseness of all devils !'

Knuckles were patently thudding upon Jan Singh's prosperous ribs.

'Nay, nay,' protested the cook. 'I came bearing the jewels, eager to entrust them to my lord's keeping. But a djinn arose—an afreet of the hills, clad in the hairy pelt of a bear. He fell upon me, robbing me of mine all in one stroke !'

Jiwn Dass's gasp was eloquent of his surprise.

'A bear ?' he cried. 'I also, then, confronted him, unclean, ferocious, baring a hundred cruel teeth. My speed saved me. Hast thou no legs ?'

'Listen !' moaned the cook desperately. 'Thus it came about. Easily I gained the jewels, cutting a slit in the tent cover, not even having to enter, but gripping the kilter with mine arm alone. For excuse for mine absence I took a jar, to seek wild honey, in which the memsahibs delight. The pearls I kneaded into *chupatties*, lest, inquiry being made, I should be searched. I also took syrup for my provisioning, using it as cover for the bracelet and rings. So I entered the forest and came to the appointed place, and as fate decreed found a nest of wild honey, and filled my jar, well content. And yet by this very thing I was undone.

'For when the monster arose from the thicket the smell of my jars reached him. I fled. Filled with gluttonous wrath he pursued, and with one snatch plundered me of *chupatties*, honey, syrup—all ! Naked I escaped as by a miracle !'

Jiwn Dass groaned loudly.

'Oh day of misfortune ! oh day of Fate's displeasure !' he bewailed. 'I too saw the splash of syrup upon the monster's coat !'

'And know, then, that I am a true man,' went on Jan Singh with obvious relief. 'Thou hast not heard all. Seeing that he

forbore to follow, I also halted, crying aloud, that I might chance to scare him from his prey. But he observed me not, ripping open my wallet and taking a *chupatty* at a gulp.'

'With the worth in it of hundreds of rupees!' moaned the curio merchant. 'Oh day of blackness! oh hour of torment! What have I deserved that the gods should visit me thus!'

'Nay, in this *chupatty* were no pearls. It held the gold mohur which hung from the bracelet which I had bestowed within the jar. Of which *Hurput* quickly had knowledge. Endeavouring to swallow it, he choked—fighting for breath—beating the air—agonising!'

'Oh monster of voracity!' deplored Jiwun Dass. 'That an unclean beast should be fed upon jewels—that his shameless stomach should be lined with pearls!'

'Nay,' contradicted the cook again, 'this was not so. For in his torments he fell, breaking the jars and basket and grinding the *chupatties* into paste. He rolled this way and that; when at last he coughed up that which was righteously bringing him death his hide was clotted with honey, with crumbs, and—woe is me!—with jewels also. The pearls in the broken cakes are still glued to his evil skin!'

Darent, suddenly and fervently uplifted by this intelligence, did not escape a start. A twig broke beneath his foot.

The rascals chorussed their terror.

'What is that?' the two cried as one.

'This!' came the answer in Sitka's voice, and the darkness was dispersed. A fusee spat redly across the night and against a flare of paraffin-soaked waste. The flames illuminated the glade.

'He who moves save at my desire—dies!' said the tracker composedly, and Darent saw that the red gleams shone upon a revolver barrel. Ten yards below him Jan Singh and his patron, the curio merchant, were bursting out into torrential appeals for compassion. The Balti heard them coldly.

'Will the Presence condescend to hold the torch?' he asked, and descended upon the pair like some grim incarnation of Fate. Producing a coil of cord he trussed them up with skill and matter-of-factness. He looked up at his employer.

'And now, sahib?' he inquired stolidly.

The first pale glimmer of dawn shone in the east and fell upon the haggard faces of the prisoners. Darent, as he reflected that by the time he reached the camp dawn would have reached the full flush of morning, fell into the throes of poignant mirth. What an

awakening for his dear friend Bankart—what an awakening! He motioned up the path down which they had come.

Before they reached the clearing he paused.

'Anchor them to this pine,' he commanded, and walked towards Bankart's tent.

As he reached it the curtain was thrust aside, and Bankart, sniffing luxuriously at the morning air, appeared, tea-cup in hand. His eyes grew suddenly saucer-like.

Without greeting Darent advanced upon him, linked an arm through his elbow, and drew him in silence towards the prisoners. Before Bankart could properly articulate his surprise Jan Singh had become the illustration upon which Darent poised a narrative of categorical completeness. The indictment was convincingly pressed home.

Bankart listened like a man in a dream. He offered no comment; he rumbled up his scattered hairs; he stared at Jan Singh as if the day held no other object worth a moment's attention. And then—his wife's voice reached him.

He wheeled.

Both Mrs. Bankart and Mrs. Palliser had appeared from their tents and were approaching with expressions of bewildered amazement. At the sight Bankart made a feeble attempt to rally a spirit which the events of the last few minutes had humbled to the dust.

'I don't say I disbelieve you,' he cried aggressively, 'but where are your proofs—your proofs?'

Darent spoke curtly to Sitka. Within the space of thirty seconds the latter had gone and returned, bearing a bundle and a jar. Unrolling the first he displayed the bear skin, still clotted in paste. From the jar he dripped upon it the liquid butter. He began to knead it with dextrous fingers.

Suddenly he paused and handed his master a tiny object. A moment later, between finger and thumb, he produced a second. Quickly and yet more quickly the tangled fur began to give up its secrets.

Bankart gasped.

'You mean to tell me that those——'

'Are Mrs. Palliser's pearls,' said Darent blandly.

FRANK SAVILE.

OF CERTAIN ENGLISH OLD CHINA.

BY J. H. YOXALL, M.P.

I PERCEIVE a certain clerk. Perched on a giant stool, he elbows a monumental desk ; his absurdly short and spindly legs bedangle and his fidgety feet spurn air. In a dusty, fusty part of a Palladian building I discover him ; on a torrid afternoon in eighteen hundred and—nay, the Waterloo year, let us say, though no rap cares he for Waterloo or Wellington ; his hero Boney, if any. Pent at what he calls the ‘dry drudgery of the desk’s dead wood’ he is totting up John Company’s receipts from an auction of Chinese porcelain ; a thousand crates of it, lately discharged by the stout ship *Sunderbund* upon the Poplar wharves. He frowns at the figures before him, for the sales still lessen and the profit dwindles. Yet ‘By the Mass !’ he thinks, ‘the Kien-lung and Kea-king ware is as winsome as ever !’ Witness the voucher tea-cup and saucer on the flat of the desk, ensamples of the *Sunderbund’s* delightful cargo. ‘I wish I might buy it all myself, for Mary !’ thinks the clerk.

‘How folk can care for the English or the European stuff !’ he wonders, as his fingers slacken on the quill—it drops unheeded—(I wish I could pick it up)—and his mind wanders off into an Essay of Elia. ‘Mary and I keep true to the old. . . . We love these little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that float about uncircumscribed by any element, in this world before perspective’—he strokes the tea-cup. ‘Here’s a young and courtly mandarin handing tea to a lady two miles off—see how distance seems to lend respect ! And here’s the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on a tea-cup—stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot which, in a right angle of incidence, must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead a furlong off ! . . .’ Reproachful of himself, he sets the cup down in its saucer. ‘Charles, you are cheating the Company again !’ And Elia returns to his ledgering.

I suspect the gentle Lamb of a loyal grudge ; a grudge against the English ware, supplanter of the Oriental. Else why should he, with whom old china was a passion, never put pen to paper

with a word of praise for the native sort? The *speciosa miracula*, as he dubbed the out-of-drawing-and-perspective mandarins, were they visible on exotic china alone? Did not the earliest English porcelain reproduce them, with a quaint clumsiness that gave an added charm? I admit it is mirthful to think of Lamb, who hated the India House with zest and frankness, identifying his prejudices with a mercantile jealousy. But why else should he, good man, who could wear his snuff-coloured smalls threadbare to have money for a 'folio Beaumont and Fletcher,' a 'Lionardo' print, or a 'set of extraordinary old blue,' spend no shilling on the delicate Frenchy graces of 'Chelsea,' the sturdy Englishness of 'Bow,' the 'Derby' delightfulness, or the superlative fitness of 'Worcester'? He confessed himself 'the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, and antipathies,' and apathy may have enchained him. Or did he think the English wares too new for his adoration, delighter in the past that he was? Why, they were aged already; English soft china was not only old but dead in the Waterloo year.

Long before Lamb first clerked for the Honourable East India Company, 'china' as a name had ceased to stand for ware of Eastern or Continental origin. Gone were the days when the shelves of every self-respecting British mansion must hold a Dresden *cabaret* and a dinner-service of 'armorial' Nankin; when every Chippendale mantel must uphold of Sèvres vases a pair. John Company still retained his monopoly of trade with China, and about the ringing freights thus brought to London still lay

the beauty and mystery of the ships
And the magic of the sea.

But eager crowds of merchants no longer fought on Thames-side for the costly possession of the jars, tea-equipages and 'desart-dishes' which some tall Indiaman with drooping sails had just borne into the Pool. Trafficking English minds had seen in the immense and all but crazy vogue of 'Nankin' and 'Dresden' and 'St. Cloud' a reproach and an invitation to native ingenuity; and midway of that magnificent century the Eighteenth—so fine to live in if you were somebody, so ill to exist in if you were not—very respectable quantities and qualities of English porcelain began to appear. But pooh! Elia and the 'London Magazine' shall ignore it, new-fangled, money-making stuff!

Maligned but benevolent commercial spirit, who shall vindicate thee? Spirit that through the selfish pocket leads up to the

general good—that out of filthy lucre alchemises civilisation, diffusing comfort—that multiplies amenities, smooths asperities, and brings to artisan and burgher dainties and decencies the Grand Condé of Chantilly could not buy. We English are not a nation of shopkeepers for nothing, it is true; nor yet for our own benefit alone. Out of our individual gains has come a profit general; have we not been cheapeners, commonisers and benefactors to the world? Pelf, was it, that motived us? Nay, not entirely and only; for a kind of patriotism stirred our emulous breasts; ever our merchants have been pioneers of Empire. Trade does not follow our flag—it is our flag which follows trade.

In the middle third of the eighteenth century riches awaited Englishmen who should both make and sell a potware translucent and white. To do that would be only a step forward, a cumulating effort, for in the production of opaque and heavy crockery England already stood first. The pæan of the English earthenware potter has never been sung, and it lies outside my gamut here; but not the platters of Delft nor the plates of Strasburg, the dishes of Nevers nor the lavabos of Rouen, could compare for fitness and variety with the wares of Staffordshire, Fulham, and Leeds. So now in porcelain also to vindicate ingenious England! Alike against the amazing skill of slit-eyed barbarians and the insufferable brag of Meissen and St. Cloud! So now in England to do by private capital and native craftsmanship what Cosmo of Florence, Augustus of Saxony, and Louis of France had helped to be done by patronage and gold.

Our truly English, independent rule-of-thumb attempts at that go back in the chronicle two hundred and fifty years; we were protagonists at porcelain-making in the European field. I know it is not till 'the Forty-five' that our earliest-dated piece of china known to be extant was made at Chelsea, but what a gem it is! What perfection already! A little jug so exquisitely modelled, with such an alighting bee at its neck, and such an old faun of a goat at its base, that the clay of it might have been moulded on silver embossed by the *orfèvrerie* of France. No trial piece by a 'prentice hand, the jug of the goat and bee! Be sure that the Chelsea House was busy long before 'the Forty-five.' Some day from a dark and dusty old cupboard somewhere an ignorant hand shall fish a vessel which illuminati will know for the eldest 'Chelsea' of all.

Indeed, it is during an earlier rising, in 1716, when good Queen

Anne, that proverbial lady, is newly dead ; when the Old Pretender is feebly challenging the oldest George, and

The standard on the braes of Mar
Is up and streaming rarely ;

that the peaceable burgesses of London, thinking of punt-fishing at Isleworth next Sunday, are suddenly and absurdly invited to buy at the bookshop in Walbrook a 'Pamphlet on the Making of China in England as Good as ever was Brought from the Indies.' And methinks that in this booklet a keen literary nose might scent the peculiar pouncet of Defoe. For consider ; the wily Daniel had been penning pamphlets of all sorts since 1683—among them an 'Essay on Projects,' by-the-by—and in 1716 the world was yet three years to wait for his first realistic romance. Crusoe made pots and pipkins out of his island clay, you remember, and his biographer shows knowledge of paste, lead-glaze, firing, and other technicalities ; learned, I conceive, when writing for bread and the booksellers that account of 'a try'd and infallible method,' of making a china-material by grinding up Oriental ware and mixing the powder into paste. Truly 'a short way,' Mr. Defoe, but an expensive ; and a dodge, no device, no native invention ; out of the family tree of English china I prune that bastard shoot.

But—earlier yet. Except indeed for the kind of porcelain which Cosmo's potters made at Florence—oldest in Europe, eldest of the Occidental, is the kind of porcelain produced at Fulham in the reign of the second Charles. And that without royal aid or protection at all. First on the roll of English china-potters let me place the name of John Dwight, M.A. and B.C.L. of Ch.Ch.Oxon, and sometime Registrar to the Bishops of Chester. It was so long ago as 1671 that Dwight the artist, scholar and gentleman, took out his patent for 'the mysterie of transparent earthenware commonly known by the names porcelaine or china.' And presently he produced a material which under the microscope can hardly be told from the common grey stuff of Nankin. For lack of a Cosmo the Magnificent this Fulham enterprise languished, it is true ; Charles II. had no gold to spend on art ; in 1672 he was lavishing a hundred and thirty thousand pounds on Madame de Querouaille, beautiful hussy ! Yet to-day at South Kensington a figure of a child amidst flowers and a skull—typical late Renaissance subject—shows what in his 'transparent earthenware' John Dwight unassisted by Royalty could do.

Dwight dies, the neglected artist's indignant sense of failure bitter with him to the last, no doubt; he lies in Fulham churchyard forgotten, while the seconds of a hundred and sixty years tick into the rearward segment of Time. Then a pick breaks through a mouldering wall at Fulham, the contents of a hidden chamber see the light of 1866, and from neglected shelves descendants furnish forth other works of the old master-hand. One of them an heirloom indeed; at South Kensington you may note its pathos—a pillowed figure of 'Lydia Dwight, died March 3, 1673,' the artist's little daughter reft away at seven years old; 'if you have tears prepare to shed them now.' No Della Robbia can compare with this, modelled in tear-wet clay from life in death; from the Quakerish hooded little head, glazed glimmering eyes, and nightgowned little body at rest in pallor, Lent lilies clasped in the praying hands. Or go to Bloomsbury and there regard the mighty bust of Rupert the partizan, sumptuous in ringlet and lace and collar of St. George, but nobly masculine, life-breathing, sculpture indeed—the despair of modern potters. Oh streets and squares of London which native thwackers and choppers of clay have uglified in stone and bronze, if but your defacers could have learnt from Dwight true art or honest abstention!

The first English porcelain potter was splendidly innovating and individual, and in the arts individuality is surely the essential if not the all. Original and individualistic was to be the very material in which our later porcelain potters wrought. English soft china is unique and insular, indigenous, racy of the soil; by the mere touch, by blindfold touch, you can tell it from Chinese or Japanese or European mainland ware. Those are 'hard'—the English is 'soft'; those are 'true' or 'natural'—this is fictive. 'An ingenious and beautiful counterfeit' my neighbour Professor Church (who most writes with insight, taste, erudition and science on it) has called the ware; but what creative hope, what noble patience in the counterfeiting! Quoth certain audacious English, 'If the proper minerals don't exist in our soil we'll invent 'em!' and they began to search, experiment, fail with heartbreak, and endeavour anew; not Palissy himself was more persistent. Many a moving page of biography could I write on these fine old fellows; for their motives had ceased to be mercenary in the main. In the pride of the deviser and joy of the discoverer they pursued their quest with passion into ruin; 'l'homme est un apprenti, la douleur est son maître'; it was out of pains enormous and long travail

that the snowy, light-shot, tender-fibred porcelain of England came to the birth.

From the days of Marco Polo almost to those of Captain Cook the earths for true-porcelain making had remained an 'Asian mystery' to Europe; the slit-eyed mandarins under the glaze seemed to wink at the West as if with mocking secrecy, the dragons ramped as if the enigma to defend. In the sixteenth century English artificers could mount Nankin bowls in silver-gilt with admirable skill, but the bowls themselves were beyond their craftsmanship. Something uncanny, some Orient sorcery of djinn and fiery-spouting monsters, explained this wonderful ware to the common; the Tudor courtiers believed the 'poringer of white porselyn' and 'cupp of green' which Queen Elizabeth treasured to be moulded in a spontaneous material — stuff as naturally exotic as diamonds or jade; and even a Lord Bacon had to write of 'mines of porcelain.' Later, when more was known, how clear to the British mind that china-clay and china-stone could exist in China only! The very names of kaolin and petuntse told one that; not the Arabian Nights could be more inalienably Oriental.

But the next century opens and—hey, a wonder! The foraging and insolent brains of German science have been at work, one Böttger has discovered a china-clay and a china-stone in the Erzgebirge highlands, the secret of the Asian sphinx is become a Saxon mystery now. Thus rises to fame the ware of Dresden, true porcelain indeed, of pinwire fibre and fine mechanic excellence. 'Dresden' crosses the Channel, is sold on our quays and sale-tables, and its parti-coloured painted German gentry begin to gall our English potters worse than the blue mandarins have done. Use and wont may have worn the edge of Staffordshire's resentment against Nankin, but shall a wretched little German Duchy flout us, too?

There are highlands in Cornwall, as well as in Bohemia, but not until 1753 will Cookworthy the Plymouth Quaker discover in Tregonning Hill the brother and sister to the stone and clay that Böttger dug from the Erzgebirge. Meanwhile, as Nature seems to have disinherited England of kaolin and petuntse, what ails the English potters that they should not emulate the French? France also, is she not disinherited? And yet since 1695 they have been potting a kind of porcelain at St. Cloud. Frenchmen! the hereditary frog-eating foe! John Bull the potter reddens, suffocates.

Yet an unpatriotic nobility and gentry purchase the ware of St. Cloud.

'Soft' stuff, no doubt—an imitation, a counterfeit, and badly done at that; composed of such prosaic matter as chalk and marl, immixt with a mysterious 'glassy frit.' But it sells. Come then, is there not chalk in the Weald and marl in Worcestershire? And cannot some English chemist devise a 'glassy frit'? There is no Priestley as yet in Birmingham; London attracts such British chemists as exist; and that is why near London it is, and not in Staffordshire, that presently at Chelsea, Bow, and Limehouse, at Battersea, Lambeth and Greenwich, tentative kilns for porcelain begin to fume; each baking a different compost, for a discoverer who swears by his own recipe and sticks to it bull-headed; till bankruptcy descends in turn upon them all.

So thus, out of common English minerals—not kaolin and petuntse, but the very plebs of the hillside, chalk, sand, flint, marl, with gypsum, steatite and bone-ash added—comes into being the white translucent 'paste' of English china. And out of lead, salt, nitre, potash, soda, smalt, and borax the glossy transparent 'glaze.' The paste is the body, the complacent potters explain; and the glaze is the skin. It is 'soft' glaze, they confess; the use of too harsh a dish-clout may scratch the lucent surface. It is 'soft' paste; the blade of a penknife can abrade it. Where at the base of cup or mug or bowl the rim has been ground flat and bare of glaze, the finger-tips feel it smooth and soapish. To the hand or lip this English china offers a warmer, tenderer touch than the *dure* and chilly Chinese ware or Saxon. It is porous; colours meltingly sink into the paste, or 'run' in the glaze and cloud it. A broken edge may be rough and lump-sugarish to the look and touch, but will not mark a finger-nail rubbed across it. In short it is *gentle* porcelain, friendly and mellow; mild, softly smooth, and modishly fragile. Easily it cracks, breaks, ruins; to handle it is an exercise in tact, to own it a discipline in fortitude. 'Hast thou a vessel of earthenware?' Epictetus the sententious counselled. 'Then consider that it is of earthenware, and by consequence facile and obnoxious to be broken. Therefore be not so void of reason as to anger or grieve thyself when breaking comes to pass.' Obvious and trite, but truer still of English soft porcelain! To-day it is garnered in locked cabinets by doating collectors, and by dealers amorous of what they sell, who dust it themselves, with caution infinite; yet somewhere every hour, I think, some piece goes

crashing down. Treasure your Chelsea figure or your Worcester bowl as you may, it is a thing of beauty which cannot be a joy for ever; 'facile and obnoxious to be broken,' it will crack, it will shatter at last.

And it can never be renewed—each nullified piece leaves the remnant rarer; in that resides part of the charm. One might riddle and mix plebeian earthenware again, and thrice through sieves strain out a delicate white compost, and from that courteous and consenting paste mould a Derbyish figure or a Worcesterish bowl; artistic forgers in France and Germany have done it, indeed. But call me a rogue if to an enlightened eye the dearest copy could ever bear the look which a hundred and fifty years of the chymic action of air have given the real identical! The *fabrique* is irrecoverable, and I am glad of it; how else should each treasure rest, an unrepeatable dainty bequeathed from the past, like the glow of a Varley landscape or the powdery haze of a pastel by Quentin de la Tour?

As I write, my left hand holds a Chelsea 'large boy,' one of the hundred 'Cupids for desert' which the sale at the Chelsea House in 1754 sent forth to grace the dessert on Georgian dining-tables. When the cloth was drawn these dainty little lads were marshalled in fours upon the gleaming mahogany, Jeames and Tummas setting them gently down to guard the Chelsea fruit-baskets in the centre. This boy of mine (for I have come to regard him paternally) is a cherubical little fellow four inches tall, with rounded limbs and a complexion 'fairer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius'; I dare say none of Romney's beauties could truly boast such a milk-white skin, so tinged with rose, not rouge. All under the incomparable sheen and radiancy of the pellucid 'Chelsea' glaze, an amicable puerile visage pouts out, below hair that is (appropriately in a Cupid) hued like the wing of Venus' courser the dove. Around the chubby feet, and wreathed in a sash upon him, hip to shoulder, flowers bloom that no botanist can recognise; moly, may be, or asphodel celestial. Abrupt and inconsequent from the rear of the sash a wisp of a waist-cloth winds about him, his only covering. Hence he is shy; but he is friendly, his pose and air convey an amicable mien. Oh, a golden lad, indeed—or rather, a silvern! But look, a crack has severed his left biceps, in life he certainly would drop his woodland burden—the doves in the nest he holds have been decapitated and de-winged; half the greenery at his heels is desiccated; his tubbings and scrubblings have scratched

his complexion—the old boy has been in the wars ! Does he hate the bright jail of my cabinet, and long to mirror himself with his brothers in Georgian mahogany again ? But his fellow Cupids are gone, with the Georgian fair and gallant—‘golden lads and girls all must, as chimney-sweepers, come to dust.’ Yet he lasts, so far—old-young as he is, old-young as he was before my great grandsire was a baby ; and who shall brother him by a birth of to-day ? When Machin Chose the purblind, the blinkard, the ever-cheated, came hastening to me proudly to show his purchased brace of forgeries, I had but to put my ‘large boy’ beside them to send him confounded away.

So a word to all forgers of English soft china (for they read whatever is printed about the ware)—‘Messieurs, ’tis vain—Herren, ’tis futile ! The look, the air, the scratches of the scythe of Time as well as the scrape of the finger-nail on the paste, discomfit you. You may swelter like your furnaces, you may pother like your kilns, but never shall you get your imitative stuff quite right. How should you ? Each pottery had its secret recipe, and each potter his own rule-of-thumb ; do you suppose those leather-aproned old fellows mixed their clays by the weighed ounce, and their bone-ash by the pennyweight ? Not they ! A handful of this, a snuff-pinch of that ; the experienced guess, the happy knack, the luck of chance—that was how a Francis Thomas at Chelsea, a Thomas Frye at Bow, an Andrew Planché at Derby, and a John Lyes at Worcester concocted. And that was how the pastes came to vary so, in body and texture, in harder softness or softer hardness, in whiteness or creaminess, in weight. All you seem to have learned about it, and all you can imitate, is that the body of English old porcelain was “soft.” Soft ? Just so is Mendelssohnian music soft ; but hear a Paderewski ! Messieurs and Herren, go to !’

Soft are the hues of it, also, soft as the skies of Spring. Into the tender old welcoming substance the colours sank with sweet affinity, marrying the milky clay with certainty of long life together, if hand of scullery-maid but spared ; the dish-cloth scratches to be as the wrinkles which mark a comely old face with the map of a life, and the abraded gilding as the thin-worn nuptial ring of Darby’s Joan. Calm smoothness, unfrozen snowiness, chastened colour, here ; yonder, an icy haughty brightness. On the hard glaze of ‘Dresden’ and ‘Sèvres’ the enamels curd and lie congealed, unpenetrating, flat, not lustrous ; apathy if not antipathy between them and the porcelain, like cat and dog on the same hearthrug,

the only nexus a quiescent slumber. But in cups of 'Chelsea' and saucers of 'Swansea' translucency and hue combine, as in the petals of a rose. Oh exquisite rich softness—Delia's lip! Oh liquid trembling light—her pitying eye!

The pen grows lyrical, and with cause, for English old china steps at last to her throne, the queen and bride of Keramos. In Paris to-day illuminati hunt and pay for *pâte tendre* as if it were gem-set gold. Good souls, they have wearied of the rigid perfection and engine-turned finish of their faultily faultless 'Sèvres,' and they hanker after a porcelain more gentle and whimsical, more peccable and personal—their 'Chantilly,' their 'St. Cloud'—that makes a warmer, a more homely appeal. Yet their best in that kind is but so-so, compared with our Chelsea or Derby, our Bow or our Worcester, our Swansea and—climax—Nantgarw. . . . 'Messieurs and Herren, to pronounce that last name illustrious, you give it three syllables that rhyme with kangaroo.' . . . True it is, I allow, that we borrowed from France in our beginnings—that Chelsea imported French limners, that perhaps the earliest modeller at Derby was a Frenchman, that a Frenchman first painted the 'Lowestoft' rose. But, forthsooth, what of that? We borrowed from borrowers. I could draw a family-tree of china decoration—two trees, indeed—the one with its roots in the Orient, the other growing from Saxon soil. As for the first, all Europe copied the blue and white mandarins, tea-ladies, and dragons; for the other, 'twas Hannong of Dresden who carried the seed into France. The 'Lowestoft' bloom was but struck from the Strasburg variety, and certainly never was roseate blossom less like a rose. But our English flower is of Nature herself; William Billingsley first took that rose from her garden at Derby; it bloomed at Nantgarw, Swansea, and Coalport indigenous, as much and peculiarly English as the Worcester paste or the Chelsea glaze. And with it what blossom of the ceramic can compare?

The ground-colours also! Around the dazzling white panels or 'reserves' within which the flowers and birds were limned in England, what noble broad enamels spread! 'Sèvres' and 'Dresden' themselves were fain to copy her claret hue from 'Chelsea.' And think of the Worcester lapis-lazuli, salmon, and powder-blue; the Lowestoft carmine; the Derby apple-green and yellow; the cobalt of Longton Hall; the Coalport lake and the Devonport purple! To the colour-sense and impressionist eye a cabinet of this old ware—'infinite riches in a little room'—gives the delight

of a riot of hues, Turneresque ; for Time has brushed-in the half-tones, the chymic action of light and air has softened crudity, chastening the primaries ; and the play of shine and shadow on the reticulated glazes gives the rest.

The tea-ware pleases me most, for *Thea Bohea* is the true family-tree of porcelain ; but for the 'shrub divine' there might have been no call for sublimated vessels that could give the beverage no tang. Because of tea-infusion the Orient drank out of china while Europe still swigged at the leather bottel. Tea civilised us at last ; pewter and wood might be good enough vessels for ale, but even earthenware mugs could not serve the nice for fine liquors ; Ronsard decried them for wine :

Mais contemplons de combien tu surpasses,
Verre gentil, ces monstrueuses tasses.

Crystal was the ware for Ronsard's libations ; but only the half-barbaric Russian can drink tea out of glass. Ronsard had been dead three-quarters of a century when Pepys wrote 'I did send for a *cup* of tea, a Chinese drink, of which I had never drunk before' ; John Company, that had brought the China drink to London, had brought the china vessels too. From the first tea felt at home in England ; in that we are the Western Chinese ; but what had Germany, what had France, to do with tea ? The making of cups and saucers at Meissen and Vincennes was the flattest of piracy, the most nationally needless ; what palate had the Teuton or the Gaul for tea ? To this day you shall see a Frenchman who feels unwell degust with nausea the insipid brew he calls 'thé' ; just as our great-grandams with the vapours drank camomile. It was *here* that tea and teacups took out letters of naturalisation. 'You must understand that there is no good tea to be had anywhere but in London' Madame du Boccage in 1750 wrote home to Rouen.

Not the chimney vases and statuettes, therefore, but the tea-table cups and saucers, jugs and basins, are the characteristic pieces of English old porcelain ; a systematic collector (that contradiction in terms, that logician among fantastic hobby-riders) might well confine his acquisitions to those delicate old toys for service in the mittened hands of the Georgian fair. When ladies paid several crowns a pound for tea they were content to pay several pounds for 'Crown Derby' from which to drink the infusion. Till Staffordshire hardened and cheapened it fine English china was never to be had for a song. Doctor Johnson goes to 'drink

tay' with Mrs. Thrale, and at his eleventh cup berates the foolish costliness of 'chaneys.' He smacks the table, making the saucers ring. 'Ma'am, on my journey from Lichfield I visited the Derby pottery, and I protest I could have vessels of silver, of the same size, as cheap as what are made of porcelain there.' Delighting in her Worcester tea-set—blue with glints of red and gold—Mrs. Thrale sits smiling at the rusty economist. The pride of those charming old hostesses in their 'equipages,' in ante-five o'clock days when tea was drunk to a ceremonial! Their personal care of it, though they could not know what value was to accrue! In 1903 a Worcester tea and coffee 'equipe,' scale-blue with panels of exotic birds and the square mark, was sold at Sotheby's for seven hundred guineas. How Doctor Johnson's shade near by in Fleet Street would growl!

So 'Where's your Wully Shakespeare *noo*?' say I to the Green Vaults, and the pompous Musée in the green French valley where embattled Saxons came; at tea and tea-ware we vanquish. But not in these alone. Set a Chelsea figure beside a Meissen group, and at once a puerile toyishness and a rococo vulgarity in the German moulds become apparent. I must not go so far as to say that Grand-Ducal Germany, like the Kaiser's realm to-day, was devoid of the very sense of art,—it is perhaps an Elian prejudice which makes me long to say something almost as sweeping; but the 'figurines de Saxe' at the best were superior 'ornaments for mantel-pieces,' and empty of artistic feeling. Sèvres in that century erred by the other excess; her statuettes were glacial and painfully-perfect porcelain imitations of classical statuary, undersized. They repel me, as do those excellent small copies of famous great pictures which elderly plain spinsters with great industry in the Louvre and the Uffizi so carefully produce; the breath of individual art was never in their nostrils, they were always æsthetically dead. Bacon and Nollekens and Roubiliac modelled for 'Bow' and 'Chelsea,' I know, and had the 'figurines de Saxe' for inspiration; but the Bow and Chelsea figures were individualistic and original in spite of that, and quaintly dainty into the bargain. Also they are homely and honest, they do not make pretence or pretension. The Bow figure of Kitty Clive looks what it was, a clay model fresh from the thumb-stroke, instinct and life-breathing, not a chiselled statue in small. Art should fit itself to its material, surely; the art of the Sèvres figures did not. There is also a fitness of niche and surroundings; place me the 'Flying Mercury' where Stevenson

saw a copy of it, in the open at Grünewald, 'tiptoe in the twilight of the stars'; I do not want a Sèvres Venus de Milo on a console. Give me a metal Perseus of Cellini, if I *must* have its miniature: give me (in things little) the Derby biscuit figures of the Boy with the Dog—of the Georgian youth who sextons the dead bird, and the Pamela damsel who bewails it; I do not want an Apollo Belvidere in crockery. Such, Messieurs de Sèvres and Herren of Meissen, is my wretched taste.

I—my—me!—how wise was the china-loving clerk of Leadenhall Street to merge and hide Charles Lamb in Elia! How free what he would have called an *Elia* makes the pen! One cannot pen on porcelain without ringing out of it the personal note.

China's the passion of his soul,
A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl!

That was sung of Horace Walpole, most personal and individual of letter-writers, read almost wholly now for the personal note. A Worcester vase, a Chelsea beaker delighted him; but I dare say he admired the jars of Kutani, the urns of Sèvres and the 'real lace'-fringed figures from Dresden as much. Let us permit each other our amiable egoisms in taste. I don't know why I should jeer at a china 'George III. in a Vandyke dress, leaning on an altar.' I stood before a collection of 'Worcester' which an enthusiast had lent to a provincial art-gallery. Said another bystander near, 'That covered chocolate-cup cost him sixty pounds! What waste, how ridiculous! If I could collect it would be mediæval wooden images.' Gogs and Magogs were *his* fancy. And I have heard of a man who possesses thirty-eight grandfather's clocks! Why not? Why jeer? Cannot we be catholic in these things? Myself, could I contrive it, would I not collect Romanesque cathedrals and Renaissance châteaux? Would I not displace, set down in England, line with cabinets of porcelain, hang with early English water-colour drawings, and inhabit, the Château d'Azay?

Let my pen repent. With the wilful, planchette-like, bit-between-the-teethish, runaway habit of a pen that every writer knows, it has written hard things about hard 'Sèvres'; though the French was once a ware magnificently beautiful, sumptuously fine I will go to Hertford House again and do penance of admiration; I will recant, I will confess that I have *not* been catholic in these things. But flatly do I refuse to admire the current twentieth-century 'Sèvres' that is hot from the oven, a new and indigestible

bread ; and likewise I pass from sympathy into apathy, and then into antipathy, when I thread in thought the course and transition which English china-making took a century ago. About the year 1800 Josiah Spode the younger set himself to 'improve' English soft porcelain. He did it with a vengeance—he 'improved' it out of existence ; he mixed an odious unfeeling substance called felspar into his paste, and English soft china fainted, gasped, gave up the ghost. For when Staffordshire began to mix true porcelain, the 'beautiful and ingenious counterfeit' began to die.

Happily some remnants of it live, and are liveable with to-day. Though Bloomsbury and South Kensington, Belgravia and county mansions house it in marble halls, better it suits the corner cupboard and the chimney-breast. Something hearth-like, something dog-like, about its mute companionship and homely friendliness. It is so human and Adamic ; framed of such stuff as we ourselves inhabit awhile—not iron nor brass, nor kaolin, but dust, the common general dust ; it shares our mortality, though it exceeds our span. Shades of old English porcelain-potters, once so busy thumping your dough of clay, do ye visit your chipped and tarnished baked wares o' midnights, in the narrow long gallery at South Kensington, in the little antechamber at Bloomsbury ? Wringing immaterial hands at sight of the mischief Time has wrought ? I dream you do. Dust to dust, heart's ashes reincorporate—was *this* what ye lived for, toiled for, starved and died for, a handful of white dust shut in a case of glass ? The ignorant pass heedless, and the Philistine jeer. But a few elect shall honour ye—now and again a sonnet, an article, shall laurel your brows. Though ye worked in 'such stuff as dreams are made on,' mortal dreams, and therefore frail and transient—though but a tithe, a hundredth, of your deeds succeeded or remain—you sought to embody use in beauty, to elevate the common and amend the coarse. There lies the high appeal in what you did ; for *that* the Great Potter smiles, fraternal. He knows of 'the potter tempering soft earth,' and that 'what is the use of either sort the potter is the judge.' And shall not He your defects assail, who works Himself—so oft with such apparent failure—in 'the precious porcelain of human clay' ?

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FRÄULEIN SCHMIDT AND MR. ANSTRUTHER.¹*BEING THE LETTERS OF AN INDEPENDENT WOMAN.*BY THE AUTHOR OF
'ELIZABETH AND HER GERMAN GARDEN.'

XXXIV.

Jena, July 3.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—I am sorry not to have been able to answer your letters for so many weeks, and sorry that you should have been, as you say, uneasy, but my telegram in reply to yours will have explained what has been happening to us. My step-mother died a fortnight ago. Almost immediately after I wrote last to you she began to be very ill. My feelings towards her have undergone a complete upheaval. I cannot speak of her. She is revenging herself, as only the dead in their utter unresentfulness can revenge themselves, for every hard and scoffing thought I had of her in life. I think I told you once about her annuity. Now it is gone Papa and I must see to it that we live on my mother's money alone. It is a hundred pounds a year, so the living will have to be prudent; not so prudent, I hope, but that we shall have everything to enjoy that is worth enjoying, but quite prudent enough to force us to take thought. So we are leaving the flat, grown far too expensive for us, as soon as we can find some other home. We have almost decided on one already. Mr. Collins went to England when the illness grew evidently hopeless, and we shall not take him back again, for my father does not care, at least at present, to have strangers with us, and I myself do not feel as though I could cook for and look after a young man in the way my stepmother did. Not having one will make us poor, but I think we shall be able to manage quite well, for we do not want much.

Thank you for your kind letters since the telegram. The ones before that, coming into this serious house filled with the nearness of Death, and of Death in his sternest mood, his hands cruel with scourges, seemed to me so inexpressibly—well, I will not

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say it; it is not fair to blame you, who could not know in whose shadow we were sitting, for being preoccupied with the trivialities of living. But letters sent to friends a long way off do sometimes fall into their midst with a rather ghastly clang of discord. It is what yours did. I read them sometimes in the night, watching by my stepmother in the half-dark room during the moments when she had a little peace and was allowed to slip away from torture into sleep. By the side of that racked figure and all it meant and the tremendous sermons it was preaching me, wordless, voiceless sermons, more eloquent than any I shall hear again, how strange, how far-away your echoes from life and the world seemed! Distant tinklings of artificialness; not quite genuine writhings beneath not quite genuine burdens; idle questionings and self-criticisms; complaints, doubts, and complicated half-veiled reproaches of myself that I should be able to be pleased with a world so worm-eaten, that I should still be able to chant my song of life in a major key in a world so manifestly minor and chromatic. These things fell oddly across the gravity of that room. Shadows in a place where everything was clear, cobwebs of unreality where everything was real. They made me sigh, and they made me smile, they were so very black and yet so very little. I used to wonder what that usually excellent housemaid Experience is about, that she has not yet been after you with her broom. You know her speciality is the pulling up of blinds and the letting in of the morning sun. But it is unfair to judge you. Your letters since you knew have been kindness itself. Thank you for them.

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

It seemed so strange for anyone to die in June; so strange to be lifeless in the midst of the wanton profusion of life, to grow cold in that quivering radiance of heat. The people below us have got boxes of calla-lilies on their balcony this year. Their hot, heavy scent used to come in at the open window in the afternoons when the sun was on them, the honey-sweet smell of life, intense, penetrating, filling every corner of the room with splendid, pagan summer. And on the bed tossed my stepmother, muttering ceaselessly to herself of Christ.

XXXV.

Jena, July 15.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—Our new address is Galgenberg, Jena, —rather grim, but what's in a name? The thing itself is perfect. It is a tiny house, white, with green shutters, on the south slope of the hill among apple-trees. The garden is so steep that you can't sit down in it except on the north side of the house, where you can because the house is there to stop you from sliding farther. It is a strip of rough grass out of which I shall make haycocks, with three apple-trees in it. There is also a red currant bush, out of which I shall make jelly. At the bottom, below the fence—rotten in places, but I'm going to mend that—begins a real apple orchard, and through its leaves we can look down on the roof of another house, white like ours, but a little bigger, and with blue shutters instead of green. People take it for the summer, and once an Englishman came and made a bean-field there—but I think I told you about the beanfield. Behind us, right away up the slope, are pine trees that brush restlessly backwards and forwards all day long across the clouds, trying to sweep bits of clear blue in the sky, and at night spread themselves out stiff and motionless against the stars. I saw them last night from my window. We moved in yesterday. The moving in was not very easy, because of what Papa calls the precipitous nature of the district. He sat with his back propped against the wall of the house on the only side on which, as I have explained, you can sit, and worked with a pencil at his book about Goethe in Jena with perfect placidity while Johanna and I and the man who urged the furniture-cart up the hill kept on stepping over his legs as we went in and out furnishing the house. There was not much to furnish, which was lucky, there not being much to furnish with. We have got rid of all superfluities, including the canary, which I presented, its cage beautifully tied up with the blue ribbons I wore at my first party, to the little girl with the flame-coloured hair on the second floor. As much of the other things as anyone could be induced to buy we sold, and we burnt what nobody would buy or endure having given them. And so, pared down, we fit in here quite nicely, and after a day or two conceded to the suavities of life, such as the tacking up in appropriate places of muslin curtains and the tying of them with bows, I intend to buy a spade and a watering-pot and see what I can do with the garden.

I wish it were not quite so steep. If I'm not on the upper side of one of the apple-trees with my back firmly pressed against its trunk I don't yet see how I am to garden. It must be disturbing, and a great waste of time, to have to hold on to something with one hand while you garden with the other. And suppose the thing gives way, and you roll down on to the broken fence? And if that, too, gave way, there would be nothing but a few probably inadequate apple trunks between me and the roof of the house with the blue shutters. I should think it extremely likely that until I've got the mountain-side equivalent for what are known as one's sea-legs I shall very often be on that roof. I hope it is strong and new. Perhaps there are kind people inside who will not mind. Soon they'll get so much used to it that when they hear the preliminary rush among their apple-trees and the cracking of the branches followed by the thud over their heads, they won't even look up from their books, but just murmur to each other, 'There's Fräulein Schmidt on the roof again,' and go on with their studies.

Now I'm talking nonsense, and the sort of nonsense you like least; but I'm in a silly mood to-day, and you must take me as you find me. At any time when I have grown too unendurable you can stop my writing to you simply by not writing to me. Then I shall know you have at last had enough of me, of my moods, of my odious fits of bombastic eloquence, of my still more odious facetiousness, of my scoldings of you and of my complacency about myself. It is true you actually seem to like my scoldings. That is very abject of you. What you apparently resent are the letters with sturdy sentiments in them and a robust relish of life. It almost seems as though you didn't want me to be happy. That is very odd of you. And I sometimes wonder if it is possible for two persons to continue friends who have a different taste in what, for want of a nicer word, I must call jokes. My taste in them is so elementary that an apple-pie bed makes me laugh tears, and when I go to the play I love to see chairs pulled away just as people are going to sit down. You, of course, shudder at these things. They fill you with so great a dreariness that it amounts to pain. I am at least sensible enough to understand the attitude. But pleasantries quite high up, as I consider, in the scale of humour have not been able to make you smile. I have seen you sit unalterably grave while Papa was piping out the nicest little things, and I know you never liked even your adored

Professor Martens when he began to bubble. Well, either I laugh too easily or you don't laugh enough. I can only repeat that if I set your teeth on edge the remedy is in your own hands.

We are going to be vegetarians this summer. Papa, who hasn't tried it yet, is perfectly willing, and if we live chiefly on nuts and lettuces we shall hardly want any money at all. I read Shelley's *Vindication of Natural Diet* aloud to him before we left the flat to prepare his mind, and he not only heartily agreed with every word, but went at once to the Free Library and dug out all the books he could find about muscles and brains and their surprising dependence on the kind of stuff you have eaten, and brought them home for me to study. I do love Papa. He falls in so sweetly with one's little plans, and lets me do what I want without the least waste of time in questionings or the giving of advice. I have read the books with profound interest. Only a person who cooks, who has to handle meat when it is raw, pick out the internals of geese, peel off the skins of rabbits, scrape away the scales of a fish that is still alive—my stepmother insisted on this, the flavour, she said, being so infinitely superior that way—can know with what a relief, what a feeling of personal purification and turning of the back on evil, one flings a cabbage into a pot of fair water or lets one's fingers linger lovingly among lentils. I brought a bag of lentils up the hill with us, and the cabbage, remnant of my last marketing, came up too in a net, and we had our dinner to-day of them: lentil soup, and cabbage with bread-and-butter—what could be purer? And for Johanna, who has not read Shelley, there was the last of the Rauchgasse sausage for the soothing of her more immature soul.

That was an hour ago, and Papa has just been in to say he is hungry.

'Why, you've only just had dinner, Papachen,' said I, surprised.

'I know—I know,' he said, looking vaguely troubled.

'You can't really be hungry. Perhaps it's indigestion.'

'Perhaps,' agreed Papa; and drifted out again, still looking troubled.

Before we took this house it had stood empty for several years, and the man it belongs to was so glad to find somebody who would live in it and keep it warm that he lets us have it for hardly any rent at all. I expect what the impoverished want—and only the impoverished would live in a thing so small—is a garden flat

enough to grow potatoes in, and to have fowls walking about it, and a pig in a nice level sty. You can't have them here. At least, you couldn't have a sty on such a slope. The poor pig would spend his days either anxiously hanging on with all his claws—or is it paws? I forget what pigs have; anyhow, with all his might—to the hill-side, or huddled dismally down against the end planks, and never be of that sublime detachment of spirit necessary to him if he would end satisfactorily in really fat bacon. And the fowls, I suppose, would have to lay their eggs flying—they certainly couldn't do it sitting down—and how disturbing that would be to a person engaged, as I often am, in staring up at the sky, for how can you stare up at the sky under an umbrella? I asked the landlord about the potatoes, and he said I must grow them as the last tenant did, a widow who lived and died here, in a strip against the north side of the house where there is a level space about two yards running from one end of the house to the other, representing a path and keeping the hill from tumbling in at our windows. It really is the only place, for I don't see how Johanna and I, gifted and resourceful as we undoubtedly are, can make terraces with no tools but a spade and a watering-pot; but it will do away with our only path, and it does seem necessary to have a path up to one's front door. Can one be respectable without a path up to one's front door? Perhaps one can, and that too may be a superfluity to those who face life squarely. I am convinced that there must be potatoes, but I am not convinced, on reflection, that there need be a path. Have you ever felt the joy of getting rid of things? It is so great that it is almost ferocious. After each divestment, each casting off and away, there is such a gasp of relief, such a bounding upwards, the satisfied soul, proud for once of its body, saying to it smilingly, 'This, too, then, you have discovered you can do without and yet be happy.' And I, just while writing these words to you, have discovered that I can and will do without paths.

Papa has been in again. 'Is it not coffee-time?' he asked.

I looked at him amazed. 'Darling, coffee-time is never at half-past two,' I said reproachfully.

'Half-past two is it only? *Der Teufel*,' said Papa.

'Isn't your book getting on well?' I inquired.

'Yes, yes,—the book progresses. That is, it would progress if my attention did not continually wander.'

'Wander? Where to?'

'Rose-Marie, there is a constant gnawing going on within me that will not permit me to believe that I have dined.'

'Well, but, Papachen, you have. I saw you doing it.'

'What you saw me doing was not dining,' said Papa.

'Not dining?'

Papa waved his arms round oddly and suddenly. 'Grass—grass,' he cried with a singular impatience.

'Grass?' I echoed, still more amazed.

'Books of an enduring nature, works of any monumentality, cannot, never were, and shall not be raised on a foundation of grass,' said Papa, his face quite red.

'I can't think what you mean,' said I. 'Where is there any grass?'

'Here,' said Papa, quickly clasping his hands over that portion of him that we boldly talk about and call *Magen*, and you allude to sideways, by a variety of devious expressions. 'I have been fed to-day,' he said, looking at me quite severely, 'on a diet appropriate only to the mountain goat, and probably only appropriate to him because he can procure nothing better.'

'Why, you had a lentil soup—proved scientifically to contain all that is needed—'

'I congratulate the lentil soup. I envy it. I wish I too contained all that is needed. But here'—he clasped his hands again—'there is nothing.'

'Yes there is. There is cabbage.'

'Pooh,' said Papa. 'Green stuff. Herbage.'

'Herbage?'

'And scanty herbage, too—appropriate, I suppose, to the mountainous region in which we now find ourselves.'

'Papa, don't you want to be a vegetarian?'

'I want my coffee,' said Papa.

'What, now?'

'And why not now, Rose-Marie? Is there anything more rational than to eat when one is hungry? Let there, pray, be much—very much—bread-and-butter with it.'

'But, Papa, we weren't going to have coffee any more. Didn't you agree that we would give up stimulants?'

Papa looked at me defiantly. 'I did,' he said.

'Well, coffee is one.'

'It is our only one.'

'You said you would give it up.'

'I said gradually. To do so to-day would not be doing so gradually. Nothing is good that is not done gradually.'

'But one must begin.'

'One must begin gradually.'

'You were delighted with Shelley.'

'It was after dinner.'

'You were quite convinced.'

'I was not hungry.'

'You know he is all for pure water.'

'He is all for many things that seem admirable to those who have lately dined.'

'You know he says that if the populace of Paris at the time of the Revolution had drunk at the pure source of the Seine——'

'There is no pure source of the Seine within reach of the populace of Paris. There would only be cats. Dead cats. And cats interspersed, no doubt, with a variety of objects of the nature of portions of crockery and empty tins.'

'But he says pure source.'

'Then he says pure nonsense.'

'He says if they had done that and satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature——'

'Ever-furnished table? Holy Heaven—the good, the excellent young man.'

'—— they would never have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription list of Robespierre.'

'Rose-Marie, to-day I care not what this young man says.'

'He says—look, I've got the book in my pocket——'

'I will not look.'

'He says, could a set of men whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli—that's coffee, of course—gaze with coolness on an *auto-da-fé*?'

'I engage to gaze with heat on any *auto-da-fé* I may encounter if only you will quickly——'

'He says——'

'Put down the book, Rose-Marie, and see to the getting of coffee.'

'But he says——'

'Let him say it, and see to the coffee.'

'He says, is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings rising from his meal of roots——'

'Gott, Gott,—meal of roots!'

'— would take delight in sports of blood ?'

'Enough. I am not in the temper for Shelley.'

'But you quite loved him a day or two ago.'

'Except food, nobody loves anything—anything at all—while his stomach is empty.'

'I don't think that's very pretty, Papachen.'

'But it is a great truth. Remember it if you should marry. Shape your conduct by its light. Three times every day, Rose-Marie,—that is, before breakfast, before dinner, and before supper,—no husband loves any wife. She may be as beautiful as the stars, as wise as Pallas-Athene, as cultured as Goethe, as entertaining as a circus, as affectionate as you please—he cares nothing for her. She exists not. Go, my child, and prepare the coffee, and let the bread-and-butter be cut thick.'

Well, since then I have been cutting bread-and-butter and pouring out cups of coffee. I thought Papa would never leave off. If that is the effect of a vegetarian dinner I don't think it can really be less expensive than meat. Papa ate half a pound of butter, which is sixty *Pfennings*, and for sixty *Pfennings* I could have bought him a *Kalbsschnitzel* so big that it would have lasted, under treatment, two days. I must go for a walk and think it out.

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

XXXVI.

Galgenberg, July 21.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—I assure you that we have all we want, so do not, please, go on feeling distressed about us. Why should you feel distressed ? I am not certain that I do not resent it. Put baldly (you will say brutally), you have no right to be distressed, uneasy, anxious, and all the other things you say you are, about the private concerns of persons who are nothing to you. Even a lamb might conceivably feel nettled by persistent pity when it knows it has everything in the world it wants. Come now, if it is a question of pity, we will have it in the right place, and I will pity you. There is always, you know, a secret satisfaction in the soul of him who pities. He does hug himself, and whether he does it consciously or unconsciously depends on his aptitude for clear self-criticism. Compared with yours I deliberately consider my life glorious. And when will you see that there are kinds of

gloriousness that cannot be measured in money or position ? It is plain to me—and it would be so to you if you thought it over—that the less one has the more one enjoys. We want space, time, concentration, for getting at the true sweet root of life. And I think—and you probably do not—that the true sweet root of life is in any one thing, no matter what thing, on which your whole undisturbed attention is fixed. Once I read a little French story, years ago, with my mother, when I was a child, and I don't know now who wrote it or what it was called. It was the story of a prisoner who found a plant growing between the flags of the court he might walk in, and I think it was a wallflower ; and it, unfolding itself slowly and putting out one tender bit of green after the other in that grey and stony place, stretched out little hands of life and hope and interest to the man who had come there a lost soul. It was the one thing he had. It ended by being his passion. With nothing else to distract him, he could study all its wonders. From that single plant he learned more than the hurried passer-on, free of the treasures of the universe, learns in a life. It saved him from despair. It brought him back to the eager interest in the marvellous world that soul feels which is unencumbered by too heavy a weight of trappings. Why, I still have too much ; and here are you pitying me because I have not more when I am distracted by all the claims on my attention. I can look at whole beds of wallflowers every spring, and pass on with nothing but a vague admiration for their massed beauty of scent and colour. I get nothing out of them but just that transient glimpse and whiff. There are too many. There is no time for them all. But shut me up for weeks alone with one of them in a pot, and I too would get out of it the measure of the height and the depth and the wonder of life.

And then you exhort me not to live on vegetables. Is it because you live on meat ? I don't think I mind your eating meat, so why should you mind my eating vegetables ? I have done it for a week now quite steadily, and mean to give it at least a fair trial. If what the books we have got about it say is true, health and sanity lie that way. And how delightful to have a pure kitchen into which ghastly dead things never come. I will not be a partaker of the nature of beasts. I will not become three parts pig, or goose, or foolish sheep. I turn with aversion from the reddened horror called gravy. I consider it a monstrous ugly thing to have particles of pig rioting up and down my veins, turning into brains,

colouring my thoughts, becoming a very part of my body. Surely a body is a wonderful thing? So wonderful that it cannot be treated with too much care and respect? So wonderful that it cannot be too carefully guarded from corruption? And have you ever studied the appearance and habits of pigs?

But I do admit that being a vegetarian is bewildering. None of the books say a word about the odd feeling one has of not having had anything to eat. What Papa felt that first day I have felt every day since. I am perpetually hungry; and it is the unpleasant hunger that expresses itself in a dislike for food, in listlessness, inability to work, flabbiness, even faintness. At eight in the morning I begin with bread and plums. My entire being cries out while I am eating them for coffee with milk in it and butter on my bread. But coffee is a stimulant, and the books say that butter contains no nourishment whatever, and since what I most yearn for is to be nourished I will waste no time eating stuff that doesn't do it. Instead, I eat heaps of bread and stacks of plums, not because I want to but because I'm afraid the gnawing feeling will follow sooner than ever if I don't. Papa sits opposite me, breakfasting pleasantly on eggs, for he explains he is doing things gradually and is using the eggs to build wise bridges across the gulf between the end of meat and the beginning of what he persists in describing as herbage. At nine I feel as if I had had no breakfast. All the pains I took to get through the bread were of no real use. I struggle against this for as long as possible, because the books say you mustn't have things between meals, and then I go and eat more plums. I am amazed when I remember that once I liked plums. No words can express my abhorrence of them now. But what is to be done? They are the only fruit we can get. Cherries are over. Apples have not begun. We buy the plums from the neighbour down the hill. To add to my horror of them I have discovered that hardly one is without a wriggly live thing inside it. I wonder how many of them I have eaten. Can they be brought into the category vegetarian? Papa says yes, because they have lived and moved and had their being in an atmosphere of pure plum. They *are* plum, says Papa, consoling me,—bits of plum that have acquired the power to walk about. But according to that beef must be vegetarian too,—so much grass grown able to walk about. It is very bewildering. One day the neighbour—he is a nice neighbour, interested in our experiment—sent us some raspberries, a basket of them, all glowing, and downy, and delicious

with dew, and covered with a beautiful silvery cabbage leaf; but they were afflicted in just the same way, only more so. Papa says, why do I look? I must look now that I have seen the things once; and so the end of the raspberries was that most of them went out into the kitchen, and Johanna, who has no prejudices, stewed them into compot and ate them, including the inhabitants, for her supper.

For dinner, by which time I am curiously shaky, quite indifferent to food, and possessed of an immense longing to lie down on a sofa and do nothing, we have salad and potatoes and fruit—of course plums—and lentils because they are so good for us (it is a pity they are also so nasty), and cheese because one book says (it is an extraordinarily convincing book) that if a man shall eat beef steadily for a whole morning from six to twelve without stopping, he will not at the end have taken in half the nourishing matter that he would have absorbed after two minutes laid out judiciously on cheese. Unfortunately I don't like cheese. After dinner I shut myself up with the works of Mr. Eustace Miles, which tell me in invigorating language of all the money, time, and energy I have saved, of my increase of bodily health, of how active I am getting, how skilful and of what a tough endurance, how my brains have grown clear and nimble, my morals risen high above the average, and how keen my enjoyment of everything has become, including, strange to say, my food. I read lying down, too spiritless to sit up; and Johanna in the kitchen, who has dined on pig and beer, washes up with the clatter of exuberant energy, singing while she does so in a voice that shakes the house that once she *liebte ein Student*.

It is very bewildering. The advice one gets points in such opposite directions. For instance, the neighbour made friends the very first evening with Papa, who walked with injudicious inattention in our garden and slipped down through a gap in the fence into his orchard and his arms, he being engaged in picking up the fallen plums for his wife to make jam of; and he told me when he came in one day at dinner and found me struggling through what he considered dark ways and I thought were cabbages, that my salvation lay in almonds. I went down to Jena that afternoon and bought three pounds of them. They were dear, and dreadfully heavy to carry up the hill, and when I was panting past the neighbour's gate his wife, a friendly lady who reads right through the advertisements in the paper every morning and spends her

evenings with a pencil working out the acrostics, was standing at it cool and comfortable; and she asked me, with the simple inquisitiveness natural to our nation, what I had got in my parcel; and I, glad to stop a moment and get my breath, told her; and she immediately scoffed both at her husband and at the almonds, and said if I ate them I would lay up for myself an old age steeped in a dreadful thing called xanthin poison. I went home and consulted the books. The neighbour's wife was right. Johanna made macaroons of the almonds, and Papa, who loves macaroons, chose to disbelieve the neighbour's wife and ate them.

But the books are not always so unanimous as they were about this. One exhorted us to eat many peas and beans, which we were cheerfully doing,—for are they not in summer pleasant things?—when I read in another that we might as well eat poison, so full were they, too, of qualities ending in xanthin poison. Lentils, recommended warmly by most books, are discountenanced by two because they make you fat. Rice has shared the same condemnation. Lettuces we may eat, but without the oil that soothes and the vinegar that interests, and if you add salt to them you will be thirsty, and you must never drink. An undressed lettuce—a quite naked lettuce—is a very dull thing. Really, I would as soon eat grass. We do refuse at present to follow this cruel advice, and have salad every day in defiance of it, but my conscience forces me to put less and less dressing in it each time, hoping that so shall we wean ourselves from the craving for it—'gradually,' as Papa says. Carrots, too, the books warn us against. I forget what it is they do to you that is serious, but the neighbour told me they make your skin shine, and since he told me that no carrot has crossed our threshold. Apples we may eat, but we are not to suppose that they will nourish us; they are useful only for preventing, by their bulk, the walls of our insides from coming together. The walls of the vegetarian inside are very apt to come together if the owner strikes out all the things he is warned against from his menu, and then it is, when they are about to do that, that fibrous bulk, most convenient in this form, should be applied; and, like the roasted Sunday goose of our fleshlier days in Rauchgasse, the vegetarian goes about stuffed with apples. Meanwhile there are no apples, and I know not whither I must turn in search of bulk. Do you think that in another week I shall be strong enough to write to you?

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

XXXVII.

Galgenberg, July 28.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—This is a most sweet evening, dripping, quiet, after a rainy day, with a strip of clear yellow sky behind the pine trees on the crest of the hill. I gathered up my skirts and went down through the soaked grass to where against the fence there is a divine straggly bush of pink China roses. I wanted to see how they were getting on after their drenching; and as I stood looking at them in the calm light, the fence at the back of them sodden into dark greens and blacks that showed up every leaf and lovely loose wet flower, a robin came and sat on the fence near me and began to sing. You will say: Well, what next? And there isn't any next; at least, not a next that I am likely to make understandable. It was only that I felt extraordinarily happy. You will say: But why? And if I were to explain, at the end you would still be saying Why? Well, you cannot see my face while I am writing to you, so that I have been able often to keep what I was really thinking safely covered up, but you mustn't suppose that my letters have always exactly represented my state of mind, and that my soul has made no pilgrimages during this half year. I think it has wandered thousands of miles. And often while I wrote scolding you, or was being wise and complacent, or sprightly and offensive, often just then the tired feet of it were bleeding most as they stumbled among the bitter stones. And this evening I felt that the stones were at an end, that my soul has come home to me again, securely into my keeping, glad to be back, and that there will be no more effort needed when I look life serenely in the face. Till now there was always effort. That I talk to you about it is the surest sign that it is over. The robin's singing, the clear light behind the pines, the dripping trees and bushes, the fragrance of the wet roses, the little white house, so modest and hidden, where Papa and I are going to be happy, the perfect quiet after a stormy day, the perfect peace after discordant months,—oh, I wanted to say thank you for each of these beautiful things. Do you remember you gave me a book of Ernest Dowson's poems on the birthday I had while you were with us? And do you remember his

Now I will take me to a place of peace,
Forget my heart's desire—
In solitude and prayer work out my soul's release?

It is what I feel I have done.

But I will not bore you with these sentiments. See, I am always anxious to get back quickly to the surface of things, anxious to skim lightly over the places where tears, happy or miserable, lie, and not to touch with so much as the brush of a wing the secret tendernesses of the soul. Let us, sir, get back to vegetables. They are so safe as subjects for polite letter-writing. And I have had three letters from you this week condemning their use with all the fervour the English language places at your disposal—really it is generous to you in this respect—as a substitute for the mixed diet of the ordinary Philistine. Yes, sir, I regard you as an ordinary Philistine; and if you want to know what that in my opinion is, it is one who walks along in the ruts he found ready instead of, after sitting on a milestone and taking due thought, making his own ruts for himself. You are one of a flock; and you disapprove of sheep like myself that choose to wander off and browse alone. You condemn all my practices. Nothing that I think or do seems good in your eyes. You tell me roundly that I am selfish, and accuse me, not roundly because you are afraid it might be indecorous, but obliquely, in a mask of words that does not for an instant hide your meaning, of wearing Jaeger garments beneath my outer apparel. Soon, I gather you expect, I shall become a spiritualist and a social democrat; and quite soon after that I suppose you are sure I shall cut off my hair and go about in sandals. Well, I'll tell you something that may keep you quiet: I'm tired of vegetarianism. It isn't that I crave for fleshpots, for I shall continue as before to turn my back on them, on 'the boiled and roast, The heated nose in face of ghost,' but I grudge the time it takes and the thought it takes. For the fortnight I have followed its precepts I have lived more entirely for my body than in any one fortnight of my life. It was all body. I could think of nothing else. I was tending it the whole day. Instead of growing, as I had fondly hoped, so free in spirit that I would be able to draw quite close to the *liebe Gott*, I was sunk in a pit of indifference to everything needing effort or enthusiasm. And it is not simple after all. Shelley's meal of roots sounds easy and elementary, but think of the exertion of going out, strengthened only by other roots, to find more for your next meal. Nuts and fruits, things that require no cooking, really were elaborate nuisances, the nuts having to be cracked and the fruit freed from what Papa called its pedestrian portions. And they were so useless even then to a person who wanted to go out and dig in the garden. All they

could do for me was to make me appreciate sofas. I am tired of it, tired of wasting precious time thinking about and planning my wretched diet. Yesterday I had an egg for breakfast—it gave me one of Pater's 'exquisite moments'—and a heavenly bowl of coffee with milk in it, and the effect was to send me out singing into the garden and to start me mending the fence. The neighbour came up to see what the vigorous hammer-strokes and snatches of *Siegfried* could mean, and when he saw it was I immediately called out, 'You have been eating meat!'

'I have not,' I said, swinging my hammer to show what eggs and milk can do.

'In some form or other you have this day joined yourself to the animal kingdom,' he persisted; and when I told him about my breakfast he wiped his hands (he had been picking fruit) and shook mine and congratulated me. 'I have watched with concern,' he said, 'your eyes becoming daily bigger. It is not good when eyes do that. Now they will shrink to their normal size, and you will at last set your disgraceful garden in order. Are you aware that the grass ought to have been made into hay a month ago?'

He is a haggard man, thin of cheek, round of shoulder, short of sight, who teaches little boys Latin and Greek in Weimar. For thirty years has he taught them, eking out his income in the way we all do in these parts by taking in foreigners wanting to learn German. In July he shakes his foreigners off and comes up here for six weeks' vacant pottering in his orchard. He bought the house as a speculation, and lets the upper part to anyone who will take it, living himself, with his wife and son, on the ground floor. He is extremely kind to me, and has given me to understand that he considers me intelligent, so of course I like him. Only those persons who love intelligence in others and have doubts about their own know the deliciousness of being told a thing like that. I adore being praised. I am athirst for it. Dreadfully vain down in my heart, I go about pretending a fine aloofness from such weakness, so that when nobody sees anything in me—and nobody ever does—I may at least make a show of not having expected them to. Thus does a girl in a ball-room with whom no one will dance pretend she does not want to. Thus did the familiar fox conduct himself towards the grapes of tradition. Very well do I know there is nothing to praise; but because I am just clever enough to know that I am not clever, to be told that I am clever—do you follow me?—sets me tingling.

Now that's enough about me. Let us talk about you. You

must not come to Jena. What could have put such an idea into your head? It is a blazing, deserted place just now, looking from the top of the hills like a basin of hot *bouillon* down there in the hollow, wrapped in its steam. The University is shut up. The professors scattered. Martens is in Switzerland, and won't be back till September. Even the Schmidts, those interesting people, have flapped up with screams of satisfaction into a nest on the side of a precipice. I urge you with all my elder-sisterly authority to stay where you are. Plainly, if you were to come I would not see you. Oh, I will leave off pretending I cannot imagine what you want here: I know you want to see me. Well, you shall not. Why you should want to is altogether beyond my comprehension. I believe you have come to regard me as a sort of medicine, medicine of the tonic order, and wish to bring your sick soul to the very place where it is dispensed. But I, you see, will have nothing to do with sick souls, and I wholly repudiate the idea of being somebody's physio. I will not be your physio. What medicinal properties you can extract from my letters you are welcome to, but pray are you mad that you should think of coming here? When you do come you are to come with your wife, and when you have a wife you are not to come at all. How simple.

Really, I feel inclined to laugh when I try to picture you, after the life you have been leading in London, after the days you are living now at Clinches, attempting to arrange yourself on this perch of ours up here. I cannot picture you. We have reduced our existence to the crudest elements, to the raw material; and you, I know, have grown a very exquisite young man. The fact is you have had time to forget what we are really like, my father and I and Johanna, and since my stepmother's time we have advanced far in the casual scrappiness of housekeeping that we love. You would be like some strange and splendid bird in the midst of three extremely shabby sparrows. That is the physical point of view: a thing to be laughed at. From the moral it is for ever impossible.

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

XXXVIII.

Galgenberg, Aug. 7.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—It is pleasant of you to take the trouble to emulate our neighbour and tell me that you too think me intelligent. You put it, it is true, more elaborately than he does, with a greater embroidery of fine words, but I will try to

believe you equally sincere. I make you a profound *Knix*,—it's a more expressive word than curtesy—of polite gratitude. But it is less excellent of you to add on the top of these praises that I am adorable. With words like that, inappropriate, and to me eternally unconvincing, this correspondence will come to an abrupt end. I shall not write again if that is how you are going to play the game. I would not write now if I were less indifferent. As it is, I can look on with perfect calm, most serenely unmoved by anything in that direction you may say to me ; but if you care to have letters do not say them again. I shall never choose to allow you to suppose me vile.

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

XXXIX.

Galgenberg, Aug. 13.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—You need not have sent me so many pages of protestations. Nothing you can say will persuade me that I am adorable, and I did exactly mean the word vile. Do not quarrel with Miss Cheriton ; but if you must, do not tell me about it. Why should you always want to tell one of us about the other ? Have you no sense of what is fit ? I am nothing to you, and I will not hear these things.

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

XL.

Galgenberg, Aug. 18.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—You must really write a book. Write a very long one, with plenty of room for all your words. What is your bill for postage now ? Johanna, I am sure, thinks you are sending me instalments of manuscript, and marvels at the extravagance that shuts it up in envelopes instead of leaving its ends open and tying it up with string. Once more I must beg you not to write about Miss Cheriton. It is useless to remind me that I have posed as your sister, and that to your sister you may confide anything, because I am not your sister. Sometimes I have written of an elder-sisterly attitude towards you, but that, of course, was only talk. I am not irascible enough for the position. I do think, though, you ought to be surrounded by women who are cross. Six cross and determined elder sisters would do wonders for you. And so would a mother with an iron will.

And perhaps an aunt living in the house might be a good thing; one of those aunts—I believe sufficiently abundant—who pierce your soul with their eyes and then describe it minutely at meal-times in the presence of the family, expatiating particularly on what those corners of it look like, those corners you thought so secret, in which are huddled your dearest faults.

Yours sincerely.

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

XLI.

Galgenberg, Aug. 25.

DEAR MR. ANSTRUTHER,—Very well; I won't quarrel; I will be friends,—friends, that is, so long as you allow me to be so in the only right and possible way. Don't murder too many grouse. Think of my disapproving scowl when you are beginning to do it, and then perhaps your day of slaughter will resolve itself into an innocent picnic on the moors, alone with sky and heather and a bored, astonished dog. Are you not glad now that you went to Scotland instead of coming to Jena to find the Schmidts not at home? Surely long days in the heather by yourself will do much towards making you friends with life. I think those moors must be so beautiful. Really very nearly as good as my Galgenberg. My Galgenberg, by the bye, has left off being quite so admirably solitary as it was at first. The neighbour is, as I told you, extremely friendly, so is his wife, though I do not set such store by her friendliness as I do by his, for, frankly, I find men are best; and they have a son who is an *Assessor* in Berlin. You know what an *Assessor* is, don't you?—it is a person who will presently be a *Landrath*. And you know what a *Landrath* is? It's what you are before you turn into a *Regierungsrath*. And a *Regierungsrath* is what you are before you are a *Geheimrath*. And a *Geheimrath*, if he lives long enough and doesn't irritate anybody in authority, becomes ultimately that impressive and glorious being a *Wirklicher Geheimrath*—implying that before he was only in fun—*mit dem Prädikat Excellenz*. And don't say I don't explain nicely, because I do. Well, where was I? Oh, yes; at the son. Well, he appeared a fortnight ago, brown and hot and with a knapsack, having walked all the way from Berlin, and is spending his holiday with his people. For a day or two I thought him quite ordinary. He made rather silly jokes, and wore a red tie. Then one evening I heard lovely sounds, lovely, floating, mellow sounds coming up in floods through the orchard into my garden where I was propped against a tree—

trunk watching a huge yellow moon disentangling itself slowly from the mists of Jena,—oh, but exquisite sounds, sounds that throbbed into your soul and told it all it wanted to hear, showed it the way to all it was looking for, talked to it wonderfully of the possibilities of life. First they drew me on to my feet, then they drew me down the garden, then through the orchard, nearer and nearer, till at last I stood beneath the open window they were coming from listening with all my ears. Against the wall I leaned, holding my breath, spell-bound, forced to ponder great themes, themes of life and death, the music falling like drops of liquid light in dark and thirsty places. I don't know how long it lasted or how long I stood there after it was finished, but someone came to the window and put his head out into the freshness, and what do you think he said? He said, '*Donnerwetter, wie man im Zimmer schwitzt.*' And it was the son, brown and hot, and with a red tie.

'Ach, Fräulein Schmidt,' said he, suddenly perceiving me. 'Good evening. A fine evening. I did not know I had an audience.'

'Yes,' said I, unable at once to adjust myself to politenesses.

'Do you like music?'

'Yes,' said I, still vibrating.

'It is a good violin. I picked it up—' and he told me a great many things that I did not hear, for how can you hear when your spirit refuses to come back from its journeyings among the stars?

'Will you not enter?' he said at last. 'My mother is fetching up some beer and will be here in a moment. It makes one warm playing.'

But I would not enter. I walked back slowly through the long orchard grass between the apple-trees. The moon gleamed along the branches. The branches were weighed down with apples. The place was full of the smell of fruit, of the smell of fruit fallen into the grass, that had lain there bruised all day in the sun. I think the beauty of the world is crushing. Often it seems almost unbearable, calling out such an acuteness of sensation, such a vivid, leaping sensitiveness of feeling, that indeed it is like pain.

But what I want to talk about is the strange way good things come out of evil. It really almost makes you respect and esteem the bad things, doing it with an intelligent eye fixed on the future. Here is our young friend down the hill, a young man most ordinary in every way but one, so ordinary that I think we must put him under the heading bad, taking bad in the sense of negation, of want of good, here he is, robust of speech, fond of beer, red of tie, chosen as her temple by that delicate lady the Muse of melody.

Apparently she is not very particular about her temples. It is true while he is playing at her dictation she transforms him wholly, and I suppose she does not care what he is like in between. But I do. I care because in between he thinks it pleasant to entertain me with facetiousness, his mother hanging fondly on every word in the amazing way mothers, often otherwise quite intelligent persons, do. Since that first evening he has played every evening, and his taste in music is as perfect as it is bad in everything else. It is severe, exquisite, exclusive. It is the taste that plays Mozart and Bach and Beethoven, and wastes no moments with the Mendelssohn sugar or the lesser inspiration of Brahms. I tried to strike illumination out of him on these points, wanted to hear his reasons for a greater exclusiveness than I have yet met, went through a string of impressive names beginning with Schumann and ending with Wagner and Tchaikowsky, but he showed no interest, and no intelligence either, unless a shrug of the shoulder is intelligent. It is true he remarked one day that he found life too short for anything but the best—'That is why,' he added, unable to forbear from wit, 'I only drink Pilsner.'

'What?' I cried, ignoring the Pilsner, 'and do not these great men'—again I ran through a string of them—'do not they also belong to the very best?'

'No,' he said; and would say no more. So you see he is obstinate as well as narrow-minded.

Of course such exclusiveness in art is narrow-minded, isn't it? Besides, it is very possible he is wrong. You, I know, used to perch Brahms on one of the highest peaks of Parnassus (I never thought there was quite room enough for him on it), and did you not go three times all the way to Munich while you were with us to hear Mottl conduct the *Ring*? Surely it is probable a person of your all-round good taste is a better judge than a person of his very nearly all-round bad taste? Whatever your faults may be, you never made a fault in ties, never clamoured almost ceaselessly for drink, never talked about *schwitzen*, nor entertained young women from next door with the tricks and facetiousness of a mountebank. I wonder if his system were carried into literature, and life were wholly concentrated on the half dozen absolutely best writers, so that we who spread our attention out thin over areas I am certain are much too wide knew them as we never can know them, became part of them, lived with them and in them, saw through their eyes and thought with their thoughts, whether there would be gain or loss? I don't know. Tell me what you think.

If I might only have the six mightiest books to go with me through life I would certainly have to learn Greek because of Homer. But when it comes to the very mightiest, I cannot even get my six; I can only get four. Of course when I loosely say six books I mean the works of six writers. But beyond my four I cannot get; there must be a slight drop for the other two,—very slight, hardly a drop, rather a slight downward quiver into a radiance the faintest degree less blazing, but still a degree less. These two would be Milton and Virgil. The other four—but you know the other four without my telling you. I am not sure that the *Assessor* is not right, and that one cannot, in matters of the spirit, be too exclusive. Exclusiveness means concentration, deeper study, minuter knowledge; for we only have a handful of years to do anything in, and they are quite surely not enough to go round when going round means taking in the whole world.

On the other hand, wouldn't my speech become archaic? I'm afraid I would have a tendency that would grow to address Papa in blank verse. My language, even when praying him at breakfast to give me butter, would be incorrigibly noble. I don't think Papa would like it. And what would he say to a daughter who was forced by stress of concentration on six works to go through life without Goethe? Goethe, you observe, was not one of the two less glorious and he certainly was not one of the four completely glorious. I begin to fear I should miss a great deal by my exclusions. It would be sad to die without ever having been thrilled by *Werther*, exalted by *Faust*, amazed by the *Wahlverwandtschaften*, sent to sleep by *Wilhelm Meister*. To die innocent of any knowledge of Schiller's *Glocke*, with no memory of strenuous hours spent getting it by heart at school, might be quite pleasant. But I think it would end by being tiring to be screwed up perpetually to the pitch of the greatest men's greatest moments. Such heights are not for insects like myself. I would hang very dismally, with drooping head and wings, on those exalted hooks. And has not the soul too its longings at times for a dressing-gown and slippers? And do you see how you could do without Boswell?

Yours sincerely,

ROSE-MARIE SCHMIDT.

(To be continued.)

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